



## Virtual reality: this is not a shopfront (journal article)

Montgomery, I., & Brolly, R. (2016). Virtual reality: this is not a shopfront (journal article). *City Streets 2. Street-Forming / Re-Forming. Transforming 21st Century City Streets*, 2, 56-71. <http://uir.ulster.ac.uk/38656/>

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

### Published in:

City Streets 2. Street-Forming / Re-Forming. Transforming 21st Century City Streets

### Publication Status:

Published (in print/issue): 09/11/2016

### Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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# **STREET-FORMING | RE-FORMING**

## **TRANSFORMING THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY CITY STREETS**

### **CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

2<sup>nd</sup> CITY STREET CONFERENCE 2016

**Faculty of Architecture, Art & Design  
at Notre Dame University-Louaize**

**9-11 November 2016**





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## CONTACT

Faculty of Architecture, Art, and Design  
Notre Dame University Louaize  
P.O. Box 72 Zouk Mikhael  
Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon  
Phone: +961 9 218950  
E-mail: [citystreet@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:citystreet@ndu.edu.lb)  
INTERNET: <http://www.ndu.edu.lb/citystreet2016/index.htm>

## DESIGN AND LAYOUT

NDU DESIGN BRAND GUARDIAN OFFICE (DBGO), Notre Dame University Louaize  
PHOTOGRAPHS: Cliff Makhoul, Faculty of Architecture, Art, and Design, Notre Dame University Louaize

ISSN: 2519-1454

**Subject headings:** street, urban, design, planning, communication, sustainability, mobility, resilience, social justice

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Dear participants,

Welcome to the City Street<sup>2</sup> (CS<sup>2</sup>) Conference! The year 2016 is indeed a year to revisit city streets, and put efforts together to understand, explain and propose contemporary approaches to streets in an ever expanding global context. We launched the CS<sup>2</sup> with the following theme:

*Streets connect but also disrupt. Streets are traces of cities' evolution and of civilizations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with unprecedented urbanization and the need for planning resilient cities, the impact on streets is tremendous in relation to transport, communication, identities, safety, functions and socio-cultural roles. Queries arise, on whether anticipating or influencing change in the roles and characters of streets should be addressed within pre-determined conventional, professional, and institutional settings or within a broader framework.*

*Defining the need for reforming streets that disrupt to those that connect, this conference asks: to what extent should disciplines be engaged with street progress in terms of theory, practice and education in an era with new social networks, new political springs, new diseases, and new forms of art and culture? To what extent are streets urban arteries seeking to facilitate communication or is there a new complexity of streets, uncertainties, and questions to be addressed?*

*As various actors find ways to express what is going on in streets in terms of their design, use and role in cities, the discussion on streets goes beyond the domain of design and planning. Various aspects of deliberate manifestations of social needs and concerns are addressed within the broader scope of everyday life, politics, economy, technology, communication, to name few. With their ambitions and interests, these actors attempt to reform streets in a versatile global framework, using a wide range of tools based on their backgrounds (internet, writing, painting, filming, installing and so on).*

The Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design at the Notre Dame University Louaize wishes you a successful conference. We hope this international and interdisciplinary platform provides you with opportunities for scholarly exchange of thoughts, and inspirations to new and adaptive approaches for further living, using, and designing city streets.

Dr. Christine Mady

Conference Organizing Committee Chair



## CITY STREET<sup>2</sup> CONFERENCE LIST OF TRACKS

### **T1: Streets: Communication, visualization and semiotics**

Track chair: **Dr. MARIKO TAKAGI**

Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University

Co-chair: **Ms. DINA BAROUD**

FAAD, NDU

### **T2: Reimagining City Street: The real and the virtual**

Track chair: **Professor OGNEN MARINA**

Faculty of Architecture, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

Co-chair: **Professor PAUL JAHSHAN**

FHUM, NDU

### **T3: Formal and In-Formal Street Art & Design: Interventions and innovations**

Track chair: **Dr. FEDA SALAH**

German Jordanian University

Co-chair: **Dr. NADINE HINDI**

FAAD, NDU

### **T4: Street Mobility: Current and future trends**

Track chair: **Mr. MANFRED WACKER**

Stuttgart University

Co-chair: **Dr. DIMA JAWAD**

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### **T5: Right to Street: Gender issues, contested spaces, and territorial transformations**

Track chair: **Dr. HEBA ABOU EL FADEL**

Alexandria University

Co-chair: **Dr. MAYA ANBAR-AGHASI**

College of Arts and Sciences, American University of Sharjah

### **T6: Resilient Streets: Metabolism, cataclysm, and beyond**

Track chair: **Dr. SOCRATES STRATIS**

Cyprus University

Co-chair: **Dr. AHMAD TAKI**

De Montfort University

### **\*T7: On Streets: Research tools and methodologies**

### **T8: Streets and Urban Places: Urban transformations**

Track chair: **Dr. MIAO XU**

Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Campus B, Chongqing University

Co-chair: **Dr. WISSAM MANSOUR**

FAAD, NDU

**T9: Social Dimensions of Streets: Collective memory-ies, migrant communities, performances, and events**

Track chair: **Professor ANTONI BETTLOCH REMESAR**

University of Barcelona, Polis Research Centre, Art-City-Society

Co-chair: **Dr. JEAN-PIERRE EL ASMAR**

FAAD, NDU

**T10: Streets: Urban diversity and social justice**

Track chair: **Dr. JOANNA SAAD-SULONEN**

Aalto University

Co-chair: **Prof. GEORGES LABAKI**

FLPS, NDU

**T11: Dialectical Relations in The Street: Cultural, spatial, and socio-political**

Track chair: **Dr. CEREN SEZER**

TU Delft

Co-chair: **Dr. CHRISTINE MADY**

FAAD, NDU

**\*T12: Sustainable Streets: Meeting future needs**

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**TRACK 1**





## STREETS: COMMUNICATION, VISUALIZATION AND SEMIOTICS

Track chair | **Dr. MARIKO TAKAGI**  
Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University  
Co-chair | **Ms. DINA BAROUD**  
FAAD, NDU

### DESCRIPTION

Streets can be seen as a platform to read the traces of history and the identity of our cities. Geographic features, urban planning and architecture are the long-lasting attributes of a city, while graphical elements such as inscriptions, signages, wayfinding systems, advertising boards or even graffiti, are reflections of the ongoing change through time, power, trends and technologies. This graphical surface of a street can be seen as one medium of visual communication with various forms of appearances and a wide range of functions, such as to inform, to give orientation, to (re-) present, to warn, to remind, to advertise, or even to provoke etc.

This track is dedicated to research and practice based projects focusing on elements of visual communication within the context of a "Graphic Street-scape": like typography and lettering, corporate communication and design, information graphics, wayfinding systems, urban art, among others. Contributions, looking at the research topic street/city from an interdisciplinary angle as communication design, information design, visual art, music, semiotics and perceptual psychology, are all welcome.

### KEYWORDS

Signs, semiotics, signifier and signified, visual identity, information & communication design, wayfinding systems, typography.



# READING BEIRUT: THE ARCHITECTURE OF BANKS AND BEIRUT'S URBAN MORPHOLOGY: "BANKS STREET", THE CENTRAL BANK AND THE SPREAD OF BANKS IN VITAL AREAS OF BEIRUT

**ROULA EL KHOURY FAYAD**

Lebanese American University Lebanon. E: [roula.elkhoury@lau.edu.lb](mailto:roula.elkhoury@lau.edu.lb)

## ABSTRACT

With the rise of a global communication culture and new technologies, today's cityscapes have been systematically transformed into advertising and propaganda tools for the dominant economic and political powers. This display of influence is highly visible at the street level, on buildings, and in public spaces and is symptomatic of the neo-liberal city.

This paper presents a case study of the role of the banking sector in shaping the city of Beirut, investigating two aspects. The first is its instrumental role in financing the real estate sector and the construction activities within specific local circumstances and a wider global context in the early 1990's. The second is its contribution to the image of the city through the architecture of banks and associated symbols, signs and other forms of representations.

The paper presents a reading of the new image of Beirut based on a comparative analysis of overlapping photographs and a recent photographic survey of the main streets. It will address the relationship of the banks to their surrounding environment as well as the perception of them held by users and inhabitants of these places.

The paper concludes that the transition of Lebanon's economy towards a neo-liberal model did not happen smoothly, but rather was triggered by violent protests and a financially-driven coup. It also confirms that the city fabric has been drastically transformed since the 1990's, thus questioning the future role of urbanism.

## KEYWORDS

Visual Communication, Urban Morphology, Architecture and Semiotics of Banks

## INTRODUCTION

The banking system in Lebanon emerged in the mid-1800s during Ottoman rule and was dominated by branches of foreign banks. Small local banks surfaced during the French mandate but remained limited in capital and scope. The banking sector prospered following Lebanon's independence in 1943, becoming the engine of economic growth in the country (Traboulsi, 2016). As such, the development of the sector continuously redefined economic activities and social order, and reshaped the image of the city.

One can define three distinct eras in the evolution of the banking sector and its influence on Lebanon and most pronouncedly Beirut:

- The Independence Era witnessed the creation of a new currency, adoption of Bank secrecy and the flow of foreign deposits from neighboring Arab countries. As a result, the scope and activity of local banks increased and led to them constructing headquarters along Riad Al Solh Street –that became known as “Banks Street” - as a sign of their financial power.
- The Institutions Era witnessed the establishment of the Central Bank of Lebanon to manage monetary policy and provide banking sector oversight. This allowed for an influx of foreign banks that represent the two opposing cold war poles and the growth of networks of local banks across governorates and in different areas of interest.
- The Post-War Reconstruction Era was influenced by the changing world order and rise of globalization. The banking sector witnessed a growth in its capitalization as local banks turned to finance the Lebanese government's funding gap. The increased competition between banks pushed them to expand their network and reach in new locations, redefining new commercial centers and the image of the most significant neighborhoods of the city.

## READING THE CITY, READING BEIRUT AND ITS CHANGES

### Reading The City

The city is a living organism defined by the relationship between its spatial qualities and its dominant social order and community practices. It is initially formed by the settlement of a community in a particular location that offers a distinct geography and vital natural assets. It gradually develops a system of utilities to support its resident community, hence demarcating its physical boundaries.

Many urban theorists have attempted to define the city and its development through its socio-economic characteristics. Max Weber studied human settlements and activities using a deterministic perspective relating their development to the structure of economic, political, religious and legal institutions (Weber, 1966). Lewis Mumford analyzed the development of cities through the growth of the finance industry, urbanization and political structure, as opposed to an organic relationship between people and their living spaces (Mumford, 1938). More recently, David Harvey builds on his predecessors' work by defining urbanism as a response to a “systemic crisis of accumulation” and a neglect of people's collective right to reshape their living space (Harvey, 2008).



Furthermore, human artifacts and activities, as well as demographic changes, reshape gradually -sometimes drastically -the city and its surrounding landscape. Francoise Choay provides a historic perspective for reading of today's city that is based on a process of past transformations -starting from contact spaces supporting an exchange economy in the middle ages, to the emergence of scenic spaces during the Renaissance era, and finally to the need for more circulation spaces and removal of boundaries during the industrial revolution (Choay, 2004).

The evolution of the city is graphically documented by geographers and urban planners using maps and surveys, described by historians and writers in their literature, and used by advertising campaigns, tourist guides, postcards and festive events to communicate its changing image (Djokovic, 2011). In his book entitled "Image of the City in Modern Literature," Burton Pike explains that "the city always speaks and with many voices" arousing strong feelings and vivid associations (Pike, 1981). Indeed, Kevin Lynch, in his first chapter of 'the Image of the City,' agrees that reading a city produces an image of reality that will vary significantly between different observers (Lynch, 1960). The city communicates to us through a system of signs, and we assign meanings to what we see, relying heavily on our diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

Kevin Lynch elaborates on this notion of differentiation between an observer and a resident of a city. The observer looks at the environment with more awareness and a detached view-point, while the resident is immersed in daily routines, taking the city for granted while less aware of it.

## **Reading Beirut And Its Changes**

### **Beirut Local Circumstances And Its Global Context**

The National Reconciliation Accord signed in November 1989 in Taef, Saudi Arabia is considered to be "the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon" (Krayem, 2012). The agreement settled many of the contested issues at the time during a strenuous negotiation process referred to as a "heavy consensus". It accommodated the demographic shift of the population by rebalancing the sectarian system and most importantly legitimized a new politico-economic order in Lebanon. The Taef agreement as such is perceived as a major milestone in the country's history, but it is also part of a more global phenomenon that was triggered by the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union (Fayad, 2016). These two events allowed people to devise standards of "how things should be done" (Friedman, 2005), hence announcing the end of the cold war and the beginning of the unilateral dominance of the United State model over the world.

The project of the reconstruction of Beirut city center was launched shortly after Taef and aimed at catching up with the age of neoliberal globalization and at serving as a role model of "how things should be done" in Beirut. It was backed by the increasingly intertwined political and economic powers that prioritized the conversion of downtown Beirut into an international commercial and financial center (Traboulsi, 2016), and the revival of the "Golden Age" of pre-war Lebanon. The project was launched despite wide opposition to the monopolization by a private company of decisions pertaining to public interests, the controversial mechanism that the company adopted for land acquisition, the population it catered for, the master plan it proposed and the new vision it encapsulated. In 1994, Solidere, The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of

Beirut City Center was incorporated as a Lebanese joint stock company with 50% of its shares attributed to its former land and property owners and the other 50% made available on the international stock market. The commoditization of the capital Beirut perfectly illustrates the emergence of the “global urban model” seeking to create a favorable business environment and attract external investors and developers. Solidere is a clear by product of this process and thus reveals a text or an image through which the social rules and political power were made legible (Rottenberg, 2001).

In fact, many economists argue that Lebanon has been building its economy on free markets ever since its independence, and so its move into the neo-liberal model of globalization was natural. It is in fact only during the reconstruction process that the government granted a leading role to financial institutions. The funding of the process heavily relied on national debt which contributed significantly to the recapitalization of the banking sector after the war and, eventually, to its control over the political power (Traboulsi, 2016).

This convergence of economic and political centers of power in Lebanon translate into an unprecedented surge in construction activities, fueled by Arab and international investors and encouraged locally through a wide range of financing solutions and payment facilities. The increase in the capital injected in the construction sector and the real estate boom affected land and property values in Beirut. This new reality is reflected today both at the level of the physical built environment and the social structure of the city. In a recent report, the real estate consultancy firm JLL has considered real estate activities “not anymore as a consequence of a city’s success but as actively employed to drive it”. This statement is only an assertion that ‘the neoliberal’ city is a powerful propaganda tool for the dominant economic and political powers.

### Beirut’s Changing Morphology

“In the Lebanon of today, when we say ‘Capital City’ we really mean commercial hub; when we say ‘Family Home’ we mean real estate speculation; when we say forest, vineyards, orange groves and olive trees we mean land for construction; when we say ‘citizen’ we mean a shareholder, ...” (Kemp, 2007).

From the 1990’s onwards, the city of Beirut has been the subject of remarkable physical and social transformations. The changes have been driven by market-led developments and the state has been directly complicit - via the convergence of its economic and political centers of power – in the complete dismissal of the protection and preservation of the old urban tissue. In the last three decades, we have witnessed the transformation of a city from low and mid-rise buildings, strongly influenced by the aesthetics of the international style, to a new city of high-rise buildings. It is a shift from a city molded with local materials and craftsmanship to an imported city of alien ghost-structures. These new forms could be free standing and detached from their surroundings or physically connected but claiming an identity of their own. They contribute to a process of territorial demarcation as well as to shaping a new and recognizable city skyline. Beirut as it appears to us today is best described, using Lefebvre terminology, as a ‘representational space’; a space of ideology making symbolic use of its objects (Lefebvre, 1991). It is, indeed, a strategic experimental ground for star architects and a battlefield for visual communication artists.

Looking closer at the relationship between the different elements of the urban fabric of Beirut, one can identify in some areas an old urban tissue with a clear system linking streets, plots, buildings and open spaces. The city seemed to be more compact, dense and continuous. Albert Levy called this kind of fabric a closed system, and contrasted it with an open and fragmented system of urban artifacts in the contemporary cities of today (Levy, 1999). Today, Beirut is the host of a selection of autonomous elements scattered around the city with various forms, functions, structures and accessibility. These objects are only similar in the way they un-touch the ground. The image of Beirut from the street is quite elusive with no clearly defined urban fabric. It seems that it could only be captured on a postcard or an advertising campaign on a MEA plane.

It is less important to identify the urban elements and typologies than to understand the changes that have led to their creation. In his article about the implementation of the new building law of 2004, Rahif Fayad thoroughly explains the changing morphology of the city through a systematic process dictated by institutional and regulatory frameworks. He argues that successive building laws set up a mechanism catering solely to the benefit of real estate speculators, traders and agents at the expense of the old city fabric and lifestyle of its inhabitants (Fayad, 2014). In 1992, the amendment of the building law eased the construction of high rises. It was not however until 2004 that land exploitation increased by an average of 40%, dramatically reshaping the image of the city and affecting the spatial qualities of the streets as well as in the promoted new high rises. As part of this increase in the built up area, developers were allowed to interiorize all balcony surfaces imposing on the inhabitants a new lifestyle behind curtain glass panels and bringing the social and cultural aspects of Beirut's balconies to an end. The new building law also dismissed the importance of regulating street facades and rooftop alignment. Higher buildings set back from the street contributed to the disruption of the street perspective and the emergence of new spaces completely alienated from street life by their uses (Fayad, 2014). Other legislations and laws related to land acquisitions and subdivisions further facilitated foreign and local investments in the real estate sector resulting in the gradual disappearance of the old fabric of Beirut and the emergence of a quasi-chaotic landscape of new objects in the city.

The transformation of the city fabric driven by capital and global trends would not have been as dramatic if it weren't for the institutional and regulatory frameworks enabling the surge of construction activities in the 1990's. Together, the economic and political powers in Lebanon converged into one vision to re-imagine Beirut.

## **THE SPREAD OF BANK BUILDINGS IN THE CITY'S FABRIC**

### **Independent Lebanon: Development Of "Banks Street"**

After the independence of Lebanon in 1943, the country witnessed a significant influx of foreign deposits from neighboring Arab countries, encouraged by the adoption of bank secrecy and the relative political stability. As a result, the banking sector in Lebanon flourished and witnessed the entry of more than 40 local and 13 foreign banks (Banque du Liban). The banks activity and capitalization increased, which led them to construct iconic headquarters as a sign of their financial power.

Riad Al Solh Square, previously referred to as Assour Square, hosted the 'Halles de Beyrouth' fruits and vegetables market - a long building with a pitched roof and red tiles, in front of which stood a water spring named after Sultan Abdel Hamid (Ingea &

Rayes, 2012). During the demolition of the 'Halles de Beyrouth' building in 1943, the water spring was replaced by a statue of Riad Al Solh, honoring the first prime minister of independent Lebanon and announcing the entry of the country into a new phase of international exposure and institutionalization.

Branching out of Riad Al Solh square, Riad Al Solh Street was described by Robert Saliba as a 'linear space' along which gradually spread the headquarters of banks and other financial institutions, strongly defining its formal identity and prominent role in the Lebanese economy (Saliba, 2004). The rigorous repetition of windows and vertical elements on the facades expressed a strong order and discipline. The buildings were also characterized by their large footprints and monumental entrances that reflected a sense of trust and confidence. The alignment of the facades and roofs further emphasized the linearity and the common use of the space for banking activities. In fact, the concentration of banks on Riad Al Solh Street was definitely the product of modern planning, but it was also typical of oriental and Islamic traditions of specialized streets. The street earned the name "Banks Street", defining its image as well as the one of Riad Al Solh Square.



**Fig 1.** Riad AlSolhSquare.1969  
Saviem-Chausson  
(image 11)

Modern urbanism in Lebanon started to become visible as of the 1930's through the works of an elite group of Lebanese engineers and architects that had been educated in the West, as well as foreign architects who brought with them a direct experience in and understanding of modernism (Trad, 2005). During that time, French architect and urban planner, Michel Ecochard was also commissioned to develop the first master plan of Beirut, in which he adopted modernist ideals. Many of these architects have contributed to shaping Riad Al Solh Street, which has become an excellent expression of modernism and representations imported from Europe and the West.

The Pan American Building designed by George Rais and Assem Salam in 1955 at the corner of Banks Street and overlooking today's Riad Al Solh Square, illustrates the quality and type of Westernization that was produced in Beirut at the time. During a 2011 exhibition on the modern heritage of Beirut, Richard Pelgrim described the Pan American building as 'embracing the extreme rationalism of Modernism with open arms and omitting any literal reference to the more traditional Lebanese architecture'(Pelgrim, 2011).

Banks Street was flanked by another strong icon of modern architecture: the Arab Bank headquarters designed by Dar Al Handassah's two architects Ghassan Klink and Robert Wakim and completed in the 1960's (Arbid & Arab Center for Architecture, 2016).

The building is quite recognizable because of its modular facade and the red color of its marble stone. Its rounded facade sandwiched between two streets and facing the prime minister's statue was topped with the Bank's name in large capital letters, making it quite imposing from the street level.

Right next to the Arab Bank stood the Asseily building, also known as the Capitole building, completed earlier in the 1950's. The building's large footprint took over the site of several smaller boutiques of tinsmiths. It originally housed a cinema on the ground floor and a hotel on the upper floors, both of which were shut down in the late 1960's and replaced by the headquarters of the Credit Libanais bank on the first two floors and other office spaces on the upper ones (Ingea & Rayes, 2012).

Later in the 1970s, Henri Edde designed two buildings on Banks Street using black color marble. Today, the buildings host BIT and Bank of Beirut on their ground floor and their affiliated offices above. Despite their dark color, the two buildings perfectly blended in with the rest of the white street because of the austerity of their facades and their strong sense of order and repetition.

### **Rise Of Institutions: Establishment Of The Central Bank Of Lebanon**

Many of Lebanon's modern institutions were built during the mandate of President Fouad Chehab, who was actively engaged in reform and large-scale development projects. The establishment of Banque du Liban in 1963 was one of the most significant milestones in the process of building a modern Lebanon. Under law decree #13513, BDL became a legal public entity enjoying financial and administrative autonomy with the exclusive right to issue the national currency. Its mission includes safeguarding economic stability, controlling monetary policy and regulating activities of commercial banks, as well as working closely with the government on aligning monetary policy with fiscal policy and budget.

The design of the Central Bank building was commissioned by the office of President Chehab to Swiss architects Addor and Julliard, who were initially brought to Lebanon by the Beydoun family to design STARCO commercial center in 1954 (Sayah, 2007), an iconic project recognized for its aesthetics in the 'international style' and its urban implementation.



**Fig 2.** The Central Bank Building in Hamra. 1970's [Online] Lebanese Embassy in Stockholm.



The chosen site for the Central Bank was characterized by its important location at the beginning of Hamra Street, described by Jean Louis Cohen as a 'spontaneous extension' of Downtown Beirut (Sayah, 2007). It developed naturally as buildings and public spaces were built along the street, without any previous planning by the government. It is the perfect example of economic, political and touristic proliferation of the country and the perfect location for the new Central Bank headquarters.

Raised on a platform and set-back from the street, the building designed by the Swiss architects is a cubic volume consisting of eight floors. The platform is accessed through a set of wide stairs to its right, bridging the gap between the sidewalk and the raised platform level. The entrance of the building is aligned with the steps, breaking the symmetry that otherwise could have been too imposing. The open space in front of the building mediates between the street and the public functions of the bank. The latter were made visible through the glazed facades on the ground floor, also revealing a pronounced structure that steadily anchors the building to the ground. Finally, the elevations of the building were designed to all be identical and dominated by a modular window with exposed vertical concrete structures as well as horizontal brise-soleil, casting shadows on the facade and magnifying the monumentality of the building throughout the day.

In his survey of the works of Addor and Julliard in Lebanon, Habib Sayyah argued that the architectural projects of the Swiss firm had a significant impact on the urban development of Beirut and contribution to the concretization of a modern representation of the city (Sayah, 2007). In fact, since it was established in 1963, the Central Bank has built nine other branches in different cities and areas of the country, communicating with the same language an image of pride and control.

### **Post-War Reconstruction: Spread Of Commercial Banks' Buildings In Beirut**

It was not until the 1990's that commercial banks in Lebanon witnessed an unprecedented surge. Due to their increasing role in the Lebanese economy and to their active participation in public affairs, banks have increased the number of branches, agencies and other forms of representation in the city. These representations are becoming more evident on the streets in order to attract the rising consumerist community, and more widespread in a bid to provide convenience for those who need their services. They currently occupy wide stretches on the main streets and in areas where they did not exist before, taking over the most vital locations in the city and its residential neighborhoods.

Among them are branches of Bank of Beirut, which replaced City Cafe on Sadat Street and Karkache Gallery on Clemenceau, the headquarters of Bank Audi, which occupies an entire street block in Bab Idriss, and BLOM bank's headquarters, which faces Place de la Concorde in Verdun. There are many other examples of strong flamboyant structures designed for banks to capture the eye with little concern for blending in to the surrounding environment. These highly visible interventions play an active role in shaping the image of the places they occupy and act as trendsetters for iconic and exuberant architecture, suggestive of today's neo-liberal city in the first place.

Furthermore, many headquarters are commissioned to famous and star architects, and promote sustainable architecture to enhance the image of the bank. The construction of these new headquarters and branches is usually accompanied by social events and advertising campaigns, the most recent of which was the launch of the BLF international competition for its new headquarters facing the city port. A series of events and extensive

social coverage followed every stage of the competition, referencing a democratic and transparent process and engaging the people in the competition to complement their advertising campaign.

## **ARCHITECTURE AND SEMIOTICS OF BANKS**

As architecture and design reflect social, political and economic change, we accept architecture as a form of cultural production. We can even go further by adopting Umberto Eco's theory that every cultural phenomenon may be studied as communication (Caesar, 1999) and attempting to read its embedded messages through the visual and semiotic content.

The increased importance of the banking sector and the capitalization of the economy in the 1990's, following the Taef agreement, were directly reflected in the image of the city. Several banks and financial institutions heavily invested in the construction of their new headquarters producing a set of highly visible references and representations in the city seeking attraction and singularity. The city as a seat for power is thus embodied through the architecture of banks and their symbolism, signs and other forms of representations. The relationship of the banks to the built environment around them, as well as to the perception of them by their users or inhabitants of these places, is fundamental in reading this image.

### **Banks Headquarters: Iconic Architecture**

#### **Credit Libanais**

The Credit Libanais bank recently relocated its headquarters from the Asseily building on Riad AlSolh Square to a new 33-story structure on Corniche Al Nahr. The project was commissioned to the winning entrant of an architectural competition, which has become the typical procedure to generate new ideas and publicity. It consists of two blocks, one of which is a tower of 33 stories and the other an annex building. They are linked together by two steel bridges and the entire construction is covered by a drape-like aluminum and glass skin which is blown up above the entrance of the building, revealing an overwhelming steel structure and providing a shaded drop-off area. At night, the structure is lit with LED lights distinguishing it from its empty dark surrounding. The analogy of a woman's dress and the night view of the tower are intended to be both seductive and inviting when seen from a distance. In fact, the site is only accessible by car one has to abruptly exit the motorway to go straight into one of the seven underground spaces of the building.

The construction of this new headquarters, with the significant increase in the number of floor plates and overall usable area, is symptomatic of the bank's willingness to project a steady growth and business success. However, the use of highly symbolic architecture is also suggestive of a battleground between the different competing banks.

#### **Bank Audi**

Audi Headquarters in the new downtown area is the perfect example of the intertwining relation between money and power. It is strategically located at the footsteps of the Serail hill and boasts a superb view over the sea through the newly planned Park Avenue



that is perfectly aligned with its main facade. The master plan of Solidere refers to this area as the Serail corridor and sets a limit to the building heights in order to preserve the vista from the grand Serail.



**Fig 3.** Audi Headquarters and e-Gallery Building 2001. Solidere Quarterly 2001

The monumentality of this building stems from its strategic and highly symbolic location at the heart of the city center and its extremely large footprint. The headquarters include the newly constructed design of Kevin Dash adjacent to the restored building at the eastern edge of the block, currently hosting Audi's e-gallery. The bank's façade stretches over 150 meters, directly affecting the street that runs along it as well as the larger district that it overlooks, and provides only two access points for visitors. The main entrance of the building is recessed from the street and completely glazed, exposing a large Dubuffet sculpture to the street. The facades on both sides of the entrance are covered with yellow stone, providing a sheltered space over the sidewalk echoing a colonial street arcades that was not present before in Bab Idriss. This passage is abruptly interrupted at the end of the building segment and does not even stretch until the end of the block. The attempt to revive a historic setting turned the project into a purely symbolic reference with little respect to the past. Observing the building from the back street, it looks like a fortress without a single entrance.

The new headquarters of Bank Audi is an enormous and impermeable mass that seemingly competes with the nearby Saint Louis Capuchin church and has completely destroyed the commercial character of Bab Idriss.

### BLOM Bank

The headquarters of BLOM Bank also take part in this battle. The project, commissioned to the well-known Architect Pierre El Khoury, is located on a large triangular plot facing the Concorde Galleria Center. The building is set back from the street and offers a recessed open piazza below the street level. It consists of two massive blocks, each extruding nine floors from the ground, separated by a recessed gallery space to allow light into the lower floors and a passageway to the backstreet. A floating bridge connects the two

blocks at the eighth floor. The two main facades are almost identical and represent a hybrid composition of transparent and opaque material. The glass panels are mounted on horizontal strips framing two blocks of granite cladding in the middle punctured by a repetitive window module. At the edge of the triangular plot, the structure of the facade is made visible and includes a series of circular staircases. The passers-by on the street can barely see or establish any relationship with those stairs' users, in contrast to the ones facing it that lead to the Concorde Galleria's buried square.

The imposing architecture of BLOM Bank strongly affects the reading of Concorde Square, emphasizing anonymity over sociability and quick money speculation over long-term human relations, similar to Burton Pike's depiction of the modern city as a 'City in flux' (Pike, 1981). Samir Khalaf described the building as an emblem of 'monumental post-modernity', George Arbid argued that it reflects 'an overstated high-tech exhibitionism... and a trend towards hyper-futurism' (Khalaf, 2005), and Rahif Fayad described it as a 'seductive architecture' with exhaustive use of smooth surfaces (Fayad, 1999). All these descriptions use superlative adjectives suggestive of excess and exuberance.

### **Banks Branches: Street Semiotics**

In parallel to the spread of iconographic architecture in the city, the banks have expanded their footprint on the street by opening new branches, ATM sand other representations on main streets and vital intersections. The increasing presence of banks on the streets provides access to a wider client base as well as the acquisition of primary street frontage for advertising and signage. Most of these commercial strips have undergone a total makeover heavily affected by the 'architecture' of the banks, thus altering the reading of the city.

A photographic survey of Hamra, Mazraa, Charles Malek and Badaro Street reveals standard answers to how banks should communicate as well as standard solutions as to how banks should be secured.

**Smooth surfaces:** The cladding of the facades at the street level with smooth and sleek surfaces is overwhelming. A new layer of glass, aluminum or metal sheet is added to the existing buildings to produce a neutral and uninterrupted surface denying any reference to the building's epoch, use or style and exposing a new type of order. Whether it is a reference to modernity or simply a practical packaging solution for new branches, it is definitely the most striking characteristic of the commercial street today.

**Glazed panels:** The use of large panels of glass as part of the bank's corporate identity has several connotations (Whiteley, 2003). With the rise of consumerism and the wave of new constructions, the glass panels tend to be associated with luxury products. The transparency of the material also symbolizes some of the core values that most banks like to project, such as openness, transparency, honesty and integrity. It is interesting to observe the controversial reflections of the city on some of the glazed facades, showcasing the acute discrepancy between the two languages. In some other instances, we can observe passersby watching their reflections on the glass completely dismissing what's behind it, as if acknowledging that there is no soul.

**Attractive visuals and slogans:** The heavy use of imagery, flashy colors, and seductive displays capture the eyes of the street stroller. Often, they are announcements for a new bank product or an updated slogan reflecting the bank's core values. They are

mounted on the glass panels rejecting their inherent transparent property. The 2D visual concept reduces the banks architecture to a flat composition, completely neglecting its effect on the other senses (Porter, 1997).

**Security:** In response to security concerns, many of the glazed facades have been covered with steel bars or patterns. In instances where the glass panels remain unobstructed, surveillance material is very visible and obvious to discourage any attempt of vandalism or theft. Security personnel can also be depicted on site as part of every bank's identity. In fact, each bank is affiliated to a certain security company, together contributing to the visible signage and costumes on the street.

**Technology:** Today, information technology is transforming the way banks operate, drastically affecting their appearance and possibly their physical presence in the future. Smart Rooms, One Stop stations, Tap2Pay galleries, in addition to online banking services, rely solely on the machine and use a much smaller footprint. These new concepts are spreading in Beirut and allow the bank to reduce branch overheads at a time when the customer base is becoming more mobile and demanding an improved 'experience'. They are typically white and wired empty spaces completely exposed to the side walk through large glass panels and accessible only to holders of magnetic bank cards. A few have some comfortable and homey furniture in the middle but no other "warm" elements or soul. At night, they look like huge light boxes on the street, similar to an Apple store.

Through their branches, banks are attempting to attract a larger customer base by bombarding images on the streets and heavily relying on visual communication. Their architecture seems to be dismissive of any social and environmental aspect. While most successful cities combine a diversity of uses and users on their streets to enliven their neighborhoods (Jacobs, 1961), the consolidated mass of bank representations are transforming our most vibrant commercial streets and gradually contributing to their vacuity.

### **Banks Reclaim Old City Center: Spread on Foch Street**

Away from the exuberant spread and rise of iconic headquarters, some banks have been attempting to reclaim prestige, belonging and recognition. These banks, including Fransabank, Fenicia, FNB, Bank of Beirut and BML, are locating branches in the heart of the historic city, in the colonial streets of Foch-Allenby area.

This area has significant past and present connotations. It was originally constructed to link the old harbor with the city center and was perceived as a gateway to the city from the waterfront. During the reconstruction project at the end of the civil war, Solidere meticulously restored and renovated the Foch-Allenby district, showcasing the colonial architecture characterized by wealthy details and ornamentation. It is flanked by the monumental municipality building on Weygand Street that gives this district a political symbol. In contrast to the abandoned Etoile-Maarad district, Foch-Allenby hosts high-end luxury retail stores as well as cafes and restaurants for the sophisticated business professionals, shoppers and passers-by.

## CONCLUSION

### Beirut's Economic Model: Violent-Induced transition

#### Transition to Neo-Liberalism

This paper describes banks' iconic buildings and representations in Beirut in the 1990's as a symptom of major change in the institutions and of elites promoting the city's urbanity. Although the domination of the banking, commerce and service sectors in the Lebanese economy are natural in a country that established an early banking system and adopted banking secrecy and free market practices, I would like to argue that the shift towards the neo-liberal model has been staged and required aggressive intervention of regional political and economic powers in the country. In fact, Fawaz Traboulsi argues in his book 'the social classes and political powers in Lebanon' that dominant political powers staged a financially driven coup to intentionally drop the value of the Lebanese Lira against the US Dollar (Traboulsi, 2016). The economic crisis in the early 1990s triggered an angry and fearful crowd that violently protested on the streets and succeeded in bringing in a new cabinet by Prime Minister Rafic el Harir, who embarked on an aggressive growth plan for the country, adopting a neo-liberal model that granted major roles to the financial, real estate and construction sectors.

### Beirut's Morphology: The Irreversible Destruction of the Urban Fabric

The 2008 global economic and financial crisis revealed a failing system and the need for more state protection. Today, many philosophers and scientists refer to an end of globalization and an international crisis of capitalism.

The resulting damage of this past era of globalization is exorbitant at the level of urban planning, especially in cities where state led urbanism was absent. Buildings in the city have become completely autonomous with no relationship to each other or with their environment. The radical disruptions created by these objects in the city, the systematic demolition of the old, and the construction of new high rises make the city figuratively aggressive and hostile. The compact, dense and continuous fabric filled with the lives of families and friends gradually dissolve while other delusional attributes emerge. Tower cranes, bulldozers, scaffoldings and crowds of workers stand out in the middle of a new landscape of glamorous lights and windows reflecting silhouettes of people dressed in costumes and speaking foreign languages.

While some modern architects have called this revolution "the freeing of the ground", many others are more sceptical, criticizing the lack of form (Levy, 1999) and believing it to be the end of urbanism.

While this paper has presented an assessment of the impact of globalization on cities that have totally succumbed to the West, of which Beirut is an example, it is equally interesting to study peri-urban areas and peripheral settlements that would reveal another image of capitalism -one of cities that did not know or follow any Western planning initiative.

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# PREJUDICE PERPETUATION THROUGH STREET REPRESENTATION IN FILM AND TV: HOMELAND'S VISION OF BEIRUT

**NADIA MCGOWAN**

Notre Dame University Louaize Lebanon. E: nmcgowan@ndu.edu.lb

## ABSTRACT

**Homeland** (Showtime, 2011-) is a product the attacks of 9/11, a TV show that reinforces the political response to those attacks and any future ones to come, through the increasing usage of both weapons and surveillance. The Middle East is perceived in the West as a mixture of stereotypes created by images from the media. These images come both from factual sources, and from fiction, such as **Homeland**. These stereotypes set the dominating culture's cultural discourse and show its insecurities.

In **Homeland's** portrayal of Beirut's streets, we can see a perception of the Middle East as having been cut off from modernity, shown as an "other" that is threatening, and that needs to be both feared and controlled. In this paper it will be argued that the show perpetuates the stereotypical image of "evil Arabs", associated with war-ravaged countries, underdevelopment and terrorism through its misleading portrayal of the urban environment, specifically through the portrayal of Beirut's streets.

## KEYWORDS

TV Shows, Homeland, Beirut, Orientalism, Terror TV, Streets, Film studies



## INTRODUCTION

The Middle East is often seen as a muddled mixture of countries and stereotypes, built from images acquired through the media. Sources for these images are both factual, such as the news, and fictional, from films such as **Lawrence of Arabia** (1962) to contemporary television series such as **Homeland** (Showtime, 2011). Edward Said spoke about the appalling contrast between the perceptions of the East and West, and the concept of the East as being set aside from modernity, incapable of defining itself or of managing its own affairs. He also spoke about the East as an entity, an otherness, which needs to be controlled and feared. This is even more prevalent in a post-9/11 context. The threat stemming from the Arab world seems to have been recently renewed with the advent of ISIS.

This paper aims to explore how the portrayal of Beirut in this award-winning show perpetuates both Middle Eastern stereotypes and the image of “evil Arabs”, associated with terrorism, war-ravaged countries and underdevelopment.

The television drama **Homeland**, adapted from the original Israeli television series **Hatufim**<sup>1</sup>, tells the story of Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis), an American POW who is found by the Marine Corps in Afghanistan. Carrie Mathison (Clair Danes) is a CIA officer who has taken part in many undercover operations in the Middle East. She suspects that Brody has been brainwashed by Abu Nazir (Navid Negahban), an Al-Qaeda leader. Everybody except her believes Brody to be a war hero.

Carrie’s mentor, Saul Berenson (Mandy Patinkin), is the only person she can trust with her suspicions. They design an undercover surveillance operation to follow Brody in the hope of either proving his innocence or preventing any future terrorist action.

At the end of season one of the show, Brody is shown to be not just a Muslim, but also a terrorist working for Abu Nazir. He backs out at the last minute from using a suicide vest to kill the Vice President of the USA. Carrie is thought to be wrong about Brody and she is discharged from the CIA due to being mentally unstable. She will undergo electroshock therapy in the hope of regaining her sanity.

In the second season of the show, Carrie is requested by the CIA to help contact an old asset, Fatima Ali (Clara Khoury), wife of Hezbollah district commander Abbas Ali, who refuses to talk to anyone except Carrie. As a result, the CIA is forced to ask for her help and send her to Lebanon as Fatima has information regarding a meeting between her husband and Abu Nazir, which is critical to national security. The CIA will attempt to capture Abu Nazir, but will fail due to Brody warning him through a well-timed text message. Before leaving Beirut, Carrie will search Fatima’s house and take a satchel full of documents. Saul will find within them proof of Brody working for Al-Qaeda and of Carrie having been right: Brody was cooperating with Abu Nazir.

They will attempt to turn Brody into their own agent while he advances his career in Congress. Abu Nazir will later frame him for a terrorist attack on the CIA headquarters. He will leave the US with Carrie’s help at the end of the second season. By the end of the third season, he will be dead.

Homeland can be considered a Terror TV show with political propaganda purposes. Tasker (2012) labels as Terror TV those television shows under the influence of the post-9/11 political situation whose narrative is centered around themes such as the US being under threat, the bravery of individuals confronting post-9/11 hazards, racial and ethnic stereotypes and the reassurance of the state being benign and reliable. In order to

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<sup>1</sup> “Prisoners of War”, created by Gideon Raff, originally aired in 2010. It was critically acclaimed and awarded by the Israeli Academy of Film and Television.

preserve the peace, those agencies dedicated to national security must be trusted and informed: they “need to know”. This narrative of continuous surveillance is intended as a reassurance to the public. Because of national security’s utmost importance, matters such as human rights and international law might not be heeded: everything must be sacrificed on a social and personal scale for this war on terror. As Žižek said, the logic is that the Establishment loves human dignity so much that it is necessary “to legalize torture-the ultimate degradation of human dignity- to defend it.” (Žižek, 2005).

Homeland fits this description perfectly. It portrays a country at war with a far away enemy. This enemy forces the US to respond with preemptive measures on a global scale, with increased surveillance and covert operations which would be considered illegal under international law, all in the interests of safeguarding national security. This narrative helps justify a political context where disregard for human rights, increased use of weapons, and an almost Orwellian surveillance are necessary, within a Manichean rhetoric of “us” against “them”. James Castroguy argued that Homeland was a tool of the Obama administration’s propaganda (Castroguy, 2005), used to help support its “overseas contingency operations” and its increased domestic surveillance policies.

The enemy in the show is both Arab and Muslim, both terms being used as synonyms by the West, even though they aren’t. These people are portrayed through orientalist strategies, as described by Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978). The West is shown as both culturally and morally superior, opposed by these supposedly brutal, uncivilized “others” who are anchored to a past that does not evolve. In films and television, Arabs are linked to negative, immoral, traits. This Arab “appears as an oversexed degenerate, capable, it is true, of cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially a sadistic, treacherous, low, slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colorful scoundrel: these are some traditional Arab roles in cinema” (Said, 1979, pp. 287). Generally one-dimensional characters when individualized, they tend to be shown as part of a mass. This mass is portrayed as irrational, radical and needing to be stopped before their jihad conquers the West. Media stereotypes “reinforce and magnify our personal stereotypes” (Lester, 2011). What prevails is not the image of the Muslim or Arab as only being different, but of being a threat, and from there they are transformed into the identifying icon of terrorism and “so powerful has this image been that the popular media makes the equation without thinking about it” (Ahmed, 2002).

Terrorism and fundamentalism became prominent terms in the media and popular conscience in the 1980s: “they are fearful images that lack discriminate contents of definition, but they signify moral power and approval from whomever uses them, moral defensiveness and criminalization from whomever they designate” (Said, 1993, 309-310). These words – terrorism and fundamentalism – are presented to us as embodying a generalized, unclear evil that must be opposed, with the subtext that by doing so, we are automatically upholding democracy, with its connotations of rationality, moderation and “Westernness”. Through Terror TV strategies, these values are reinforced with “righteous anger and defensiveness” against those “others” supposedly bent on destroying our civilization and way of life.

These narratives are not always a random social product. An article in *Variety* magazine reported that “government intelligence specialists have been secretly soliciting terrorist scenarios from top Hollywood filmmakers and writers” (Brodeur, 2001). The people contacted, working at the Institute of Creative Technology at the University of Southern California, included screenwriters and directors who had already used terrorists within their films, such as *Die Hard*’s and *MacGyver*’s screenwriters, Steven E. De Souza and

David Engelbach, and director Joseph Zito, whose work has included Delta Force One, Missing in Action and The Abduction. The list also included David Fincher, Spike Jonze, Randal Kleiser and May Lambert, among others.

Castonguay argues that the CIA needed to justify its existence during the period in between the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 era, and achieved this through collaboration with entertainment media, used first as propaganda for the CIA, and later, to reinforce support for “the war on terror” (Castonguay, 2004). Among its products were The Agency, directed by Wolfgang Peterson<sup>2</sup>, Alias and 24. In an article depicting this process in The Guardian, it was said that the CIA supervises the scripts (Campbell, 2001), which cannot but reinforce the idea that these shows fulfill the role of vehicles for propaganda that helps to achieve the Agency’s agenda. This process will continue throughout the decade, with Homeland as one more example of a television series written in cooperation with the CIA, including members of its special ops as executive producers<sup>3</sup>. This cooperation is justified as being a tool towards ensuring the verisimilitude of the story.

Regarding the “other”, the enemy of the Terror TV show, it is common for shows to avoid being specific about their country of origin in order to avoid offending other states or any social group. The Middle Eastern Arab or Muslim depicted in such shows might come from anywhere East of Europe and West of China. By way of example, in season four of the TV show 24 an unnamed Middle Eastern country was used, and in season eight, the fictional state of “Kamistan” was created. In The West Wing a fictional country named “Qumar” was created. Lebanon, however, is generally portrayed as a terrorist stronghold, as for example in the film You Don’t Mess with the Zohan (2008), starring an ex-Mossad soldier who wants to become a hairdresser and who is followed by a group of inept Hezbollah taxi-drivers. This is a remnant of films from the 1980s, such as Delta Force (1986), and it would seem that their image of Lebanon has not been updated to a post-Civil War context.

Beirut has changed since then, it has attracted hefty investments and loans since the 1989 Ta’if Accord for its reconstruction and redevelopment, both from private investors and from organizations such as the World Bank and the European Union. Reconstruction efforts have not only dealt with the physical reconstruction of infrastructures but are trying to create a new discourse for the city, a new collective meaning (Nagel, 2002).

Cities create their own narrative too. The way they are organized is related to how its inhabitants perceive the world, understand it and interact with it. It shows an external representation of their culture and as such they can be read. Streets are their most vital organs as they are not only a means of access but also “an arena for social expression” (Smithson, 1967). Streets facilitate human and economic movement; they are a space for casual encounters, economic exchange and political statements.

Stefano Bianca in Urban Form in the Arab World (2000) mentions several factors that might have influenced current Arab cities up until the present. One is the lack of formal organization and geometrical planning in tribal settlements and another the khittat system and its lack of institutional control and layouts, with focus on autonomous city building and private arrangements public arrangements. Most Islamic cities followed an organic growth pattern controlled by social precepts, which led to an organized disorganization.

It has been argued that it is not justifiable to frame all urban developments in the region within an Islamic discourse. Just as it would be absurd to examine London only from a Western-Christian city perspective (Elsheshtawy, 2004), so it is with the Middle East.

<sup>2</sup> Director of Das Boot, Air Force One, The Perfect Storm.

<sup>3</sup> Gavin Edwards, “Homeland’s CIA Connection”. Men’s Journal, October 1, 2013. <http://www.mensjournal.com/magazine/homelands-cia-connection-20121022>.

This mistaken approach places the Middle East in a past removed from the civilized Western World, somewhere in the glorious twelfth Century, a past associated with heritage and traditions, but not with modernity, and freezing it there forever. Showing Arab cities, or in this case Lebanese cities, anchored in that orientalist, romantic, past time, reinforces the post-colonial narrative by placing their inhabitants in a context where this narrative fits. But the urban context that Homeland shows does not exist and is created with the appearance of verisimilitude but without the intention of being accurate.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze how the stereotype of the Arab and the stereotype of his city work together as part of the post-9/11 Terror TV strategies, we will proceed to examine those episodes of Homeland where Beirut is shown. To enable us to correctly do so, first of all it is necessary to carefully review the full TV series, which currently counts with five seasons and a total of sixty episodes, with a running time between 55 and 60 minutes. While doing this, it is necessary to note any references of Lebanon and Beirut to locate all instances where they are present. Our main concern is the streets shown, but they need to be contextualized within all other images of Beirut, including not only public spaces, but private ones.

Lebanon appears in the second and fifth seasons, but Beirut is only shown in the second season, in its first and second episodes. In the fifth season the show is only concerned with a brief visit to a Hezbollah-controlled refugee camp in the Lebanese-Syrian border and never enters Beirut.

Having located the relevant episodes, they need to be reviewed while noting down the time codes where our object of study is present. We note the initial and ending time code for each sequence, what location it portrays, what are the actions shown and what visual elements are present.

This information will be analyzed from two approaches: film and postcolonial studies. The action and visual elements constitute the text of our image, this is, what is being shown or said. This will be examined through a qualitative analysis based on David Bordwell's methodologies, as a renowned figure of the film studies field. Relevant to our study are *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985) and *On the History of Film Style* (1997).

This will lead to the interpretation of its subtext, or what is being implied by the aforesaid text. This subtext shall be approached from a postcolonial and contemporary film studies framework, applied to a television drama show, based on the hypothesis of urban space being descriptive of those who inhabit it and being capable of characterizing them, thus helping sustain, in this case, the stereotype of the "evil Arab".

For this it is essential to refer to Edward Said and Homi Bhaba as part of our main theoretical frame for a qualitative analysis, specially to *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), *Culture and Imperialism* (Said, 1993), *The question of the other* (Bhabha, 1990) and *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 1994). In order to better apply this theoretical framework, literature referring specifically to Homeland needs to be sought. The series was extensively analyzed in volume 54, issue 4 of *Cinema Journal* in 2005, with authors such as Castroguay or Tasker, who linked the show to the concept of Terror TV.

Given the focus on architecture and urbanism, it was necessary to also locate materials regarding this topic, such as *Urban Design: Street and Square* (Moughtin, 1992), but it

was essential to find sources applied to the Middle East and to Beirut, if possible. This presented its difficulties, as documentation in English wasn't abundant. For this reason, sources applied in general to the Middle East and Arab countries were consulted, such as *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: an Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World* (Elshehtawy, 2004), *Urban Form in the Arab World* (Bianca, 2000). Specific to Beirut, Samir Khalaf's *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj* (2006) was used.

Information about the controversy regarding these episodes was collected through online press sources, such as *The Guardian*, *Associated Press* or *The Daily Telegraph*. It is interesting to note that there were many reactions on social media to these episodes, including blogs and personal websites. They are not included in this paper, but the reception and reaction to these texts by the people they attempt to portray might be an interesting topic to complement this research in the future.

## RESULTS

In *Homeland* season two episode one, *The Smile*, we are shown the American Embassy in Beirut, some streets and alleys of Beirut, a souk (marketplace) and the Rafik Hariri International Airport.

The episode begins by showing us Carrie's home in the US, creating a contraposition between this space and the American Embassy in Beirut, starting at 00:04:49. The American home is portrayed as a safe space, for quiet thoughts and simple tasks such as gardening. In the background, the Middle East is on the television news, portrayed as a furious mob while a sign that reads "legitimate target" is on the screen.

The American Embassy is said to be located in Beirut, even though in reality it isn't. The urban space surrounding it is almost abstract, built by eye-catching elements that make up for what isn't shown. A gate separates the safe American space from the external Arab threat. The street is littered with rubbish while people in the street are burning Israeli flags. Protesters are violent and the population is portrayed as Muslim through the image of their women, who are veiled. Men are orientalized, dressed with abayas and keffiyehs. This empty urban space, taken over by the amorphous Muslim mob, contrasts with the verticality and sobriety of the Embassy. Safety needs to be ensured not only through concrete and logos but also with armed soldiers and barbed wire.

The peace of the Embassy's internal space is shown as threatened through sound (shouting coming from the outside) and light. The choice of high contrast and shadowed faces reinforces the idea of a siege. A Muslim woman is introduced as a possible informant, but diminished through a high camera angle. Even though she seems to be a "friendly Arab", she is not to be trusted because "the last unconfirmed asset we trusted blew himself up with five of our own". Within this dilemma, Saul will risk his security in the interest of national security and go to meet her.

When Saul leaves the embassy his car is surrounded by people shouting *Allahu akbar*. The opening of the Embassy's main gate symbolizes his departure from safe ground and his venture into the dangers of the city, which is obscured by smoke. Here it is especially obvious how American characters are particularized, with their fears and dread, while the Arab is generalized as part of an uncivilized, violent group.

After 00:09:06 we can see the city roads and streets. They are well paved, with abundant Mediterranean greenery, and filled with old cars. Ochre and amber tones are the main



hues that characterize the Lebanese city. There are hints of ill-use of public space, with people's washing hanging almost onto the passing cars, broken walls that need painting, ill-kept alleys, hanging cables. The city looks like an inhabited ruin.

When Saul arrives at the souk, we have a combination of narrow, shadowy spaces that reinforce the feeling of insecurity, archways and levels within levels (a labyrinth) and a lack of clear lines. Its layout lacks any straight or clean lines. All elements are superimposed, without any order: clutter, superposed vendors and stalls, more washing on the streets, hanging cables, cracks on walls, no open spaces.

So far, the text has reinforced the idea of Lebanese (identified as Arabs) being both Muslim and uncivilized. They are portrayed not as individuals, but as a mass, and this mass is set on attacking the US. The subtext is that the streets they inhabit are not properly taken care of, because its people are not civilized. This is in sharp contrast with the western spaces shown, which are well tended: the implied message is that the West would take better care of this city: these people need to be civilized.

Fatima Ali, first wife of Abbas Ali, Hezbollah district commander, refuses to talk to anyone but Carrie. Carrie managed to contact and secure her years ago as an asset for the CIA due to her weakness for American movies and Julia Roberts. The fact that her husband was abusive also helped. So, the first instance of an individualized Muslim is one oppressed by its society, who sides with the West not because she believes that any terrorist act is immoral, but because she wants revenge on her husband and the system she lives in is incapable of protecting her.

Carrie accedes, under pressure, to travel to Beirut to meet her. After a stop in a safe house in Nicosia, Cyprus, she arrives at Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport. The space is constructed between simplified police controls and big ashlar masonry. Again, women are mostly veiled and men wear traditional Arab garb. The change of scene from Mediterranean Cyprus to Beirut seems like a transition to a distant world, almost an archaeological heritage site. The idea of distance is reinforced by all written elements being in Arabic, such as taxi signs, and that of threat through a strong military presence.

We see Beirut's streets as Carrie is on her way to meet with Saul, from 00:48:39 to 00:51:36. After that point the story moves from open streets to an enclosed souk. Streets are undulating, embellished by some palm trees but mostly poor, indicated by lack of upkeep and closed down shops. The souk is messy, wares are placed carelessly almost anywhere, including sprawled on the floor. Carrie is followed, and then chased, by an Arab and she hides within the closed areas of the souk. These indoor areas are claustrophobic, the width inadequate for the amount of people and goods in them. The idea of no escape is reinforced through the image of a metal door, which effectively traps her as the man closes in on her. To escape from her assailant, she exchanges hijabs to disguise herself, hits him and leaves him on the floor as she runs off. The discourse here is of feminine invisibility: the hijab is more visible than her face, and no man would expect a woman, even from the CIA, to overpower him.

In season two's second episode, after the opening credits, Beirut is characterized through mosques. Stray dogs bark as we see empty plots of land, an underused space, when Carrie meets Fatima. Carrie now admits to having dyed her hair and to wearing contact lenses, her reasoning being that being blonde and having blue eyes would make her too noticeable in an Arab country and probably put her in danger if she weren't wearing a hijab. Again, Lebanese is identified with being Muslim, even though the Lebanese reality is far from having all its women veiled or with restricted clothing options. Fatima

gives Carrie the information about the forthcoming meeting between her husband and Abu Nazir in exchange for a reward and of a new life in the US. Thus her being friendly is justified because of both greed and the explicit statement of life in the West being better than life in the East. Fatima also tells Carrie that she can kill both men, as there is no love for her husband. The meeting will take place in Hamra Street, a well-known Lebanese street.

At 00:09:10, from within CIA headquarters, we can see that there are cameras planted in the street, which would be illegal surveillance of another sovereign state, but which is justified as being in the best interests of national security. Carrie states that "there are militia everywhere", implying that this is almost a failed state that cannot control the actions of its citizens. Hamra Street is depicted as a "dense residential area (...) controlled by Hezbollah pretty continuously since the Civil War". Because of this, the CIA have incomplete information, full of holes, and their people on the ground "can be walking into anything".

At 00:26:00 the operation in Hamra Street is given the green light. Hamra Street is shown as barely an alley, American soldiers are hidden in empty shops and snipers positioned on the rooftops. The streets become full of militia who arrive on pick-up trucks and are openly armed. The pavement, which is all we see at this point, is uneven and all the surroundings are grey. The militia leaves the cars and clears the streets. When Abu Nazir, the target, arrives he is wearing a sheikh's turban and clothes. The CIA fires and misses. This triggers an immediate evacuation of all Americans in the area, starting at 00:33:00. They are now the targets.

As the American's car darts through Beirut, we see again brown colors, archways and old cars. They reach the pickup point where they will meet Fatima. It is implied they are within Beirut, but the location is not named. The street is full of construction gear and the buildings are covered with blue hanging, ragged, cloths. There is no open public space, reinforced by the use of telephoto lenses. As the Americans wait for Carrie, who runs off to search Fatima's house, a mob gathers around them. The mob is made up by strong men, with Palestinian scarves, some of them smoking.

The interior space within Fatima's building is shown is poor, without a lift, and poorly lit. It's an unkempt area, with Hezbollah flags hanging. The inside of the house is sparse and all furniture seems decades old. As Carrie searches the house, the mob starts pushing the car and smashes a window. They are forced to leave Carrie behind. She is then pursued by armed men who fire without warning. She outsmarts them by running across the rooftops, hitting one of the men with a stone left on the stairs, and being picked up by her colleagues in the nick of time.

The information we have been given during this time is thus divided along several lines: American spaces are safe, clean and organized, but under threat; they include the American Embassy and the inside of all American cars, as an extension of their space; Hamra Street, together with Fatima's street, represents the city under military and terrorist control, because both the state and society support them, even; other exterior areas of the city are nameless, unknown and unknowable, with their lack of maintenance and organization; their disheveled state is caused both by its inhabitant's indolence and by the country been at war and a failed state; private spaces are scarce, we only see Fatima's house fleetingly. This space is also articulated far away from modernity and poorly kept.



In reality, Hamra Street is the main street in a cosmopolitan area within Ras Beirut. It is densely populated, as *Homeland* suggests, but it is a lively area, full of coffee shops, all kinds of businesses and franchises. By no means is it a narrow, dusty alley full of weapon-wielding militia. This image might be a reminiscence of the Civil War, but no part of today's Hamra Street can be realistically shown as a warzone where a gunfight is a routine event.

The Hamra sequence was in fact shot in Haifa, Israel. According to an Associated Press article "Ariel Kolitz, a Tel Aviv businessman who was the childhood friend of Gideon Raff, the Israeli co-creator of 'Homeland', said it wasn't as if the production team had the option of shooting in Beirut, where Raff and other Israelis involved are not permitted to visit and they could be in danger."

The Daily Telegraph reported that, in response to this episode, Lebanese Tourism Minister Fadi Abboud considered filing a lawsuit due to the show not portraying Beirut's real image. So far there is no news of a lawsuit having been filed.

The image this show gives of the city is especially important due to its critical acclaim and wide viewership. "This series has a lot of viewers and if you are promoting Lebanon as a non-secure zone it will affect tourism. It will mean a lot of foreigners stay away if they are convinced by what they see," Mr. Abboud said. "Beirut is one of the most secure capitals in the world, more secure than London or New York.", he continued in *Executive Magazine* (Dyke, 2012). He called upon all Lebanese to raise awareness about Beirut not being a "city of Kalashnikovs and war".

The city has been recognized by several articles in the general media as a desirable touristic destination. In 2004, *Travel & Leisure* published an article titled "Beirut is Back", like the Hamra episode. The *Guardian* also did so with "Beirut is Back... and it's Beautiful" regarding the city being one of 2010's most glamorous touristic destinations. Similar articles were published in *London Cosmopolitan*, *Lonely Planet*, *Toronto Star* and *The New York Times*.

Meanwhile, in *Homeland*, not only is the city shown as a war zone, it is shown as inhabited by orientalized Muslims. Men wear kufis, keffiyes or turbans on their heads, and are dressed in abayas with a bisht over them at times. Women are generally veiled with hijabs and also wear abayas or modest clothing. These outfits would be hard to find in Hamra Street. It is relevant to note that a United Nations ESCWA report<sup>4</sup> states that 75% of Lebanese women do not wear a veil and have freedom of dress. In stark contrast to this information, Carrie is made to change her hair and eye color to better blend in.

The hijab can be perceived by the West a symbol of women's oppression under Islam and of how they need to be freed, which justifies intervention. "Sympathy for Muslim women operates to justify withholding sympathy from Muslim men because they presumably deserve to be in Guantanamo or Abu Gharib" (Alsultany, 2013).

## CONCLUSIONS

Probably the most insidious aspect of how Beirut is portrayed in this series is its apparent verisimilitude. The viewer feels he is catching an honest, truthful glimpse of the inner mechanism of the CIA and of how authentic Arab terrorists operate when at home. These misconceptions fuel fear and false assumptions, and tell us maybe more about those who created these images than about those who are shown in them.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Professor Leila Nicolas Rahbani's paper "Women in Arab Media".

Stereotypes fixate that which defines the “other”, and this definition becomes an image that can’t be changed as the people this stereotype represents are articulated outside history (Bhabha, 1990). When Homeland reinforces the Islamic and Arab character of the Lebanese, it is making a statement of the importance of religion in their character and politics, and that these cannot be changed. It creates incorrect identifications and solidifies them.

The political premises surrounding those episodes set around Beirut are akin to the Cold War arms escalation, whereby illegal undercover operations in Lebanon are justified by the imminent threat of a potential enemy that needs to be stopped. This intervention will, at the same time, fuel future hatred and retaliations, as shown when the Americans leave Beirut, surrounded by an angry mob that has smashed their car and would be willing, it seems, to kill them. This narrative is a metaphor of the current political approach of the American Security State, which needs to justify unlawful means that have a supposedly benevolent end. These methods include disregarding human rights, increased surveillance, and illegal military operations in other sovereign states, in the name of Democracy. In Homeland, all these tropes are woven into the story to better reinforce the need to ensure national security and the individual safety of every American, for which every character is willing to sacrifice him or herself. The evident expectation being that, if they are willing to, the viewer should be to.

While not all Muslims in Homeland are terrorists, all terrorists are Muslims, and so are all Arabs and people in the Middle East, including Lebanese. Brody will only start working for Al-Qaeda once he has converted to Islam. The viewer is seemingly presented with a complex story aimed at making him reassess his prejudices: some Muslims are good. Eventually, the “evil Arab” stereotype is reinforced through instances such as when Brody proves to be on the terrorist’s side by warning Abu Nazir and helping him escape.

The association between the Middle East and the abuse of women’s rights “pathologizes Islam and constructs it as something that needs ‘curing’ or Western ‘enlightenment’” (Bevan, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. Carrie asks “oppressed” Muslim women for information, who will give it in exchange of being granted a new life in the US, which represents their liberation. Note that Fatima Ali is described as the “first wife” of Abbas Ali, which begs the question of how many other wives are there and how poorly he might be treating all of them, since she will be happy to see him die.

The supposed savagery and uncivilized state of these people is also portrayed through their urban footprints: the city is chaotic, badly kept, poorly organized; the state allows its streets to be taken over by armed men without any action, up to the point that other armies can invade its space unnoticed; Nobody with a modicum of civilization would tolerate living in a city such as this one.

In reality, contemporary Beirut has many problems, such as the lack of better urban planning, management and infrastructures, but it is neither a warzone nor a war-ravaged city in need of the CIA to rescue it from its inhabitants. Viewers of Homeland might doubt the meanness of its evil characters, but it is harder to doubt the appearance of a city and the implication of what can be seen of it. Images such as the ones shown in Homeland do nothing but perpetuate orientalist perceptions, fear of the Middle East and stereotypes that diminish the chances of a future peaceful coexistence.

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<sup>5</sup> Sherene Razack, “Geopolitics, Culture Clash and Gender after September 11”, *Social Justice* 32, no. 102 (2005):11-31, Sunaina Maira, “‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Muslim Citizens: Feminist, Terrorist and US Orientalisms”, *Feminist Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009): 631-656.

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# THE MOLDING OF LEBANESE IDENTITY THROUGH “TEMPORARY” CULTURAL OBJECTS

**NOEL NASR**

Notre Dame University Louaize Lebanon. **E:** nasrnoel@gmail.com

**SIMON MHANNA**

The Moment, Canada. **E:** simon.mhanna@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Objects have the power to evoke feelings and thoughts. Whether created out of need or as the expression of an identity, they are the product of a culture. Over time, people develop relationships with objects, consciously or unconsciously.

The project started with a survey whose principal interest was to gauge people's thoughts on Lebanese cultural objects used to fill a gap on any level of the system. The circuit breaker (disjoncteur), used for switching between the electricity provided by the government and that produced by private generator companies came top of the list.

The majority of Lebanese households and industries suffering from a long-term shortage of electricity, resort to private generators for alternative energy. This service, which surfaced as a post-war phenomenon and gradually became mainstream, has steadily left a significant imprint on the identity of the country, becoming, within a fairly short time, a “legitimate” cultural resource that reveals shared habits and behaviors.

The paper argues that the disjoncteur has marked the Lebanese streets and shaped the way Lebanese society functions to a profound extent. Furthermore, the authors challenge the notion of its “temporariness” in view of the entrenched corruption of the system and lack of real alternatives. It also brings to the fore the street language that emerged around the disjoncteur as a significant connecting node for multiple manifestations of system successes and failures, behaviors and identities.

## KEYWORDS

Identity, Street Language, Cultural Objects

## INTRODUCTION

Objects have a certain power to evoke feelings and thoughts. People develop relationships with objects, consciously or unconsciously, that build over time. In the book *Evocative Objects: Things we think with*, various scientists, humanists, artists and designers present and discuss the influence of objects on their respective paths (Turtle, 2007). Those objects play a major role in detecting and creating links to ideas and to people. They take various forms: natural, artifacts, ready-made or created by the authors. In all cases, they are considered to have a higher purpose or role. Beyond their primary function, the authors study and share experiences where the objects acted as catalysts for an emotional state or intellectual activity, without a doubt significantly affecting their way of life, careers and interests.

Likewise, objects that become embedded in a community or a culture's everyday life, be it for a practical or a spiritual purpose, willingly or unwillingly, eventually define their lifestyle, thus becoming cultural objects. Whether injected into their environment out of need or out of fancy, they eventually alter human behavior, thereafter affecting the expression of the environment.

Such objects may be permanent but they may also be temporary, eventually washing out with progress, social evolution and technological innovation. In the case of this particular study, the cultural objects the authors will discuss were meant to be precisely that: temporary. They were only ever meant to be a transitory part of Lebanese society's life as it awaited the return to social "normality" but were never supposed to turn into a central aspect of Lebanese daily life. However, hindered by a deep-rooted corrupt system, which is anything but "normal", they have lingered on for decades and on they still linger, in the process altering not only the visual appearance of Lebanese streets, but an entire country's identity and semiotics.

The authors of this study are documenting the chaotic visual but also oral expression of these objects on the street and drawing a parallel between their visual appearance and the corruption of the system from which they sprang and in which they continue to thrive. Simultaneously, the authors are weighing the long-term impact such temporary cultural objects are likely to have on Lebanon's national identity and its people's psyche, and whether the "metamorphosis" they have caused will fade away when these objects become obsolete or if their mark could become permanent.

In obvious tandem with these questions, the authors wonder what solution there might be to, firstly putting an end to the rampant corruption that has caused the pullulating presence of these objects on the Lebanese street scene, but also to the dilemma of whether these cultural objects, which have unambiguously had a profound effect on Lebanese people's mind-set, should continue to be regarded as "temporary" or whether they should be integrated into Lebanese society and language as *de facto* aspects, once and for all.

## OBJECTS THE WAR BROUGHT IN

The project started with an online survey sent to 100 people, and the population of interest of this study is all adults living in Lebanon. While the study sample can't be considered representative of the original population of interest, generalizability was not a primary goal. The principle objective of this study was to collect people's feedback regarding Lebanese cultural objects. The main and only question of the survey focused on identifying objects /

services that existed in Lebanon for the purpose of filling a gap on any level of the system; objects / services that are meant to eventually disappear the day the system finally starts functioning properly; in other words, temporary cultural objects.

The results revealed several such objects and services, from the large gas bottles, which are still the main gas supply for most of the population; water trucks, which most people still have to resort to due to regular water shortages; candles, torches and a small array of other items. However the one object that came top of the list by far (78 mentions out of the 93 responses received) turned out to be the circuit breaker (referred to with its French term, *disjoncteur*, in Lebanon), an electrical contraption used for switching between the electricity provided by the government and that produced by private electricity generators.

The majority of Lebanese people, households and industries, suffering from electricity shortages and regular power cuts - a continuing legacy of the 1975-1990 civil war - resort to private generators (also referred to by the French word *moteur* in Lebanon) as a form of alternative energy. This system surfaced as a post-war phenomenon, when government electricity supply became all but inexistent and those who could afford to do so resorted to using their own small private electricity generator or *moteur*. Gradually, as the government electricity supply didn't show any sign of improving dramatically or at all and more and more people relied on *moteurs*, some started to see this situation as a means of making money. Before long, there were several individuals, "neighborhood generator producers" as Chafic Abi Said (2015) refers to them, who invested in high-power generators in order to sell electricity to several households and industries.

Step by not so small step, the private sale of electricity became a thriving business throughout the entire country, and private generator companies began to mushroom up and down the land, smoothly passing from being an illegal but vital tool to a "legitimate" cultural resource with its very own shared set of traditions, habits, rituals and behaviors. Every Lebanese neighborhood now has at least one but sometimes more "neighborhood generator producers", who "sell electricity via an independent micro network to a number of subscribers, always at a fixed rate, without meters, but depending on the subscriptions capacity {example" a 5 Amperes (1000 VA)} (Abi Said, 2015)".

Some generator companies in the Bekaa Valley charge up to \$125 for every 5 amperes. This is not even enough to use a water boiler or washing machine. These companies know they can get away with charging Draconian fees because it is common knowledge that the political will to solve the issue of electricity in Lebanon is all but non-existent, and while the hours of state-provided electricity vary greatly from area to area, it can be as little as just a few hours per day in many parts of the country (Westall, 2015), meaning individuals and businesses alike have no choice but to fall back on private generator companies ('Zahle generator companies angry over 24 hour plan', 2014). These companies, aptly referred to as a "generator mafia" by some ('Lights, Handguns, Action', 2014), do not hesitate to blackmail subscribers because they know only too well that the vast majority of these subscribers have nowhere else to turn to for electricity.

The authors could go on and on highlighting what is wrong with Lebanon's political system and infrastructure, but the point here is mainly to draw attention to just how entrenched it is and how the stagnation it has created is what gave rise and fuelled the existence of the temporary objects and services we are concerned with in this paper.



## A PERMANENT MARK ON THE STREETS

As it stands, the mark made by the service offered by generator companies and the objects attached to it - particularly the disjoncteur - on the identity of the Lebanese community has steadily etched itself like slow fire branding, like a linguistic and urban tattoo, leaving its unmistakable trace all over the country. What this trace represents is manifold and is very much what this essay focuses on, in an attempt to frame the visual presentation of this temporary object on the urban Lebanese landscape, as well as the particular street language it has inadvertently created. Indeed words such as moteur, disjoncteur and ampere primarily but not solely, have become a totally familiar, taken for granted part of Lebanese talk, be it in the center of Beirut or a remote mountain village.

What is noteworthy is that, more than mere words, street language is a significant connecting node for multiple manifestations of system successes and failures, behaviors and identities, much like objects are on a visual level, as Henri Lefebvre (1978) affirmed in *The Urban Revolution*, when he wrote:

“Society has been completely urbanized... the street is a place to play and learn. The street is disorder... this disorder is alive. It informs. It surprises... the urban space of the street is a place for talk, given over as much to the exchange of words and signs as it is to the exchange of things. A place where speech becomes writing. A place where speech can become ‘savage’ and, by escaping the rules and institutions, inscribe itself on the walls.”

In the context of this essay, street language itself is the manifestation of an argument, a quarrel between the government, private institutions and households, made visible through the “object” or “system” created in the country, whether as a means of protest, corruption or survival. In the case of the disjoncteur as a means of both corruption and survival, depending on whether we look at it from the point of view of the generator owners (corruption) or their subscribers (survival).

The presence of the disjoncteur on the street (figure 1) on the one hand denotes the unlikely fusion between indoors and outdoors, public and private, whilst on the other stands as a ubiquitous visual symbol of the system’s failure and of Lebanese society’s lingering ills and malfunctions.



**Figure 1:**  
Circuit breakers  
(disjoncteurs)  
as they appear  
on the streets.

While it should logically have been installed inside each home - since it is purchased and paid for by the home owner and to all intents and purposes belongs to him or her - the disjoncteur is intentionally set on the street to avoid the possibility of electricity theft<sup>1</sup>. The presence of this object on the street and often in the most unlikely places, such as a tree trunk or a post, demonstrates the constantly interactive and changing relationship between the representation and reality of cultural mistrust and fear. While private generator owners and companies openly charge subscribers extortionate amounts of money (two-thirds of average household electricity spending is on generators), they make sure that the “controlling machine” that the disjoncteur essentially is, stays where they can have immediate access to it and where their subscribers have very little to no chance of tempering with it.

## **THE *DISJONCTEUR*: AN IDENTITY IN CRISIS**

If one were to compare the disjoncteur to more common objects that belong to the street, it would become evident that, not only do its contradictory characteristics make it unique, but its effect on language, social behavior and interaction as well. In *The cultural biography of objects*, Gosden and Marshall (2007) state that “objects do not just provide a stage setting to human behavior; they are integral to it,” and that “as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other.” In the same paper, the authors back up their claim by citing Alfred Gell (1998), who regarded objects as “social actors” in their capacity to “construct and influence the field of social action in ways which would not occur if they did not exist.” A statement echoed by Latour (1999), who was also of the opinion that the meaning of an object differs by how we, as social actors, respond and relate to it. The authors experienced this first hand when they extended their study to the streets and asked people to write the name of the breaker on a whiteboard, while pointing at one.

The several individuals concerned came up with a wide range of different terms and spellings (fig. 2). When asked to write the name of the action associated with breaker tripping, the results were as diverse (fig. 3).

The important implication that arises from this experiment is the significant complex relationship and conversation that appears to exist between the human and nonhuman entities. Beyond the bold visual expression of the disjoncteur on the street, the confusion and diversity that it translates into orally carries a contradiction, while being equally representative of the chaotic system it was born from as its visual expression on the street is.

Has this object been unconsciously rejected by the Lebanese people, due to its direct birth from system failure and corruption, and therefore rendered unworthy of moral care, consideration and a single nationally recognized and accepted name? Is this rather a sign of adoption and acceptance to the extent of anthropomorphism, almost as if the disjoncteur had become such a familiar part of everyone’s life that it was affectionately baptized with a variety of nicknames? Or could it be the unconscious result and effect of the chaos on the street and in the country expressing itself verbally through those who have to live with and put up with it on a daily basis?

While some studies claim that “different groups can construct somehow different meanings out of the same cultural objects” and that theoretically, “people can make

<sup>1</sup> Circuit breakers limit the use of electricity per household to multiples of 5 Amperes per hour. The high cost of this service encourages some people to tweak the settings of the ‘disjoncteur’ to increase its allowance.



**Figure 2:** “Circuit breaker” in different terms and spellings – Street interviews, Hamra and Jounieh, Lebanon



**Figure 3:** Circuit breaker tripping” in different terms and spellings – Street interviews, Hamra and Jounieh, Lebanon

any meanings whatsoever” from them (Griswold, 2013), if one were to take into account Gosden and Marshall’s (1999) opinion that “objects can be understood only through looking at the cultural contexts which originally produced them and the new circumstances in which they later moved,” it would indeed seem to be the case, since the least that can be said about the disjoncteur is that the cultural context from which it originated was one of pure turmoil and uncertainty, and the circumstances in which it later moved were just as chaotic and unstable. It would therefore not be totally devoid of sense that its oral expression should be as fragmented as the society in which it “breeds” as if it were some sort of living organism.

Another way of looking at this would be under the light of Derrida’s notion that the meaning of a particular object, or a particular word, is never stable, but always in the process of change (Philosophy, I.E.). However the issue we are faced with in this case

is not just the instability of the object or the word that represents it, rather it is the small multitude of words that represent the same object, as if people could not quite agree on a single name to give it, as if giving its name some unity might risk moving this object from the realm of the “temporary” to that of the “permanent,” thereby indirectly destroying the hope that it will one day become an obsolete piece of machinery.

On the other hand, the use of different words to refer to the same object becomes insignificant if we take into account Laclau and Mouffe’s analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure’s rejection of the referential theory of language, which suggests that objects are already given to us as coherent entities and that “humans merely assign a name to each object or idea; different language-using-communities might choose different names, but the relationship of every community to the totality of objects is basically the same (Smith, 1998).” Saussure (1966) however holds that a linguistic sign unites a concept and a sound-image – a signified and a signifier – rather than a thing and a name. “The relationship between the signified and the signifier is arbitrary,” as Laclau and Mouffe understand this, in that “the first and rather banal implication of the arbitrariness of the sign is that one signifier could easily be replaced by another signifier for the same signified. ‘Sister’ and ‘soeur’ both function equally well as signifiers for the concept ‘sister’; the signified in itself does not in any way suggest which combination of sounds or written marks ought to be used as its signifier (Smith, 1998).” So in other words, if we were to apply Saussure’s view, whether the disjoncteur were called as such or if it were called a “breaker” or anything else, it would make no difference. However, as we have already mentioned, in this case it’s not just the name of the object that is fraught with confusion, even the action associated with it is expressed in ways that differ quite substantially.

Douglas and Isherwood (1996) argue that, more than merely functional benefits, objects play symbolic roles in translating and communicating personal, social and cultural meaning, while Hall (1997) interpreted material objects as “representational forms.” Two further views which would back the authors’ opinion that the disjoncteur and everything associated with it, in both its visual presentation and its oral expression, has become an iconic visual symbol representing on the one hand Lebanon’s corrupt system and the many shortages and inadequacies that plague it, and on the other of Lebanese people’s frustration with that system, with having to pay for everything twice (the state electricity bill and the generator company’s; the state water bill and the water truck’s, etc.) and with having to put up with the constant disorganization and lack of political will.

## **AN UNCONSCIOUS ADOPTION**

Yet against all the odds, it has also become a symbol of human survival and adaptation, as its ironically humorous use in a number of advertising campaigns and illustrations shows. In one instance (Almaza n.d.), the slogan: “there’s me... I never run out / get cut off ” is used to advertise the all-familiar Lebanese Almaza beer. In Arabic, the same expression is used to mean both things, and it’s the typical expression used when the electricity gets cut off. In another example we see an advertisement for the BeitMisk residential development use the image of a ripped off disjoncteur alongside the words: “24-Hour electricity at BeitMisk. Generators are history” as its selling point (Beit Misk n.d.). In his book, *Visible Signs*, David Crow states that all that is necessary for any language to exist



is an agreement amongst a group of people that one thing will stand for another (Crow, 2003). Accordingly, using a pun for this “temporary” matter in an advertising campaign is a solid proof that Lebanese society has embraced this situation and the exception has become the norm.



Figure 5: Almaza



Figure 6: Beit Misk

The use of electricity related issues in advertising doesn't only prove the acceptance of this situation on a national level but legitimizes it as well. According to Haddad and Salem (2013), "all advertisements relating to commercial products or services must be submitted for approval before the Ministry of Economy and Trade". This incongruous legitimization goes beyond the media to reach all governmental institutions. In his article Authorities clamp down on generator owners, Mohammad Zaatari (2015) reports how "in an attempt to boost competition and keep prices down, the municipality recently announced that it was accepting applications to invest and work within the field of power generation and

distribution,” while another article reports that the Lebanese Economy Minister “filed with the judiciary 63 cases of electricity generator companies violating the law (...) in light of widespread complaints from consumers who say they are being overcharged by generator owners despite the plunge in diesel fuel prices (McClatchy, 2015).”

If hope for serious action to restore continuous electricity on a national level is dwindling, some Lebanese cities have stopped waiting for the state to handle the situation and have taken the matter into their own hands. The city of Zahle, the capital of the Bekaa Valley, was the first to take that step in February 2015, when it began providing 24-hour non-stop electricity to its inhabitants and those of eighteen other Bekaa villages (The Economist, 28 Feb. 2015). The project was started by EDZ (Électricité de Zahle), a private institution that generates and distributes electricity in that part of the country, and which was founded in 1920 (‘Zahle Generator Companies angry over 24 hour plan’, 2014).

Whichever way one looks at it, the impact left by “temporary” Lebanese cultural services and objects has permeated to the core of Lebanese society and transformed an entire nation’s lifestyle. It could even be argued that people have been subconsciously conditioned by the necessary generator-related actions and lifestyle adjustments which have become part and parcel of Lebanese people’s daily routine, such as memorizing the consumption in Ampere of every electrical equipment to make sure the disjoncteur doesn’t trip and fuses don’t blow (literally and figuratively) when the electricity is provided by the generator company. Also planning in advance and prioritizing which electrical equipment to use or leave on during generator-provided electricity time, for instance if you live on the fourth floor and need to move something heavy into your flat, you need to make sure you do so during state-provided electricity time, particularly as many lifts are not connected to generators. However projects such as the Zahle one are a clear indication that this apparent conditioning has not numbed people to the point of making them forget there are possible solutions, and that despite the blatant state corruption, there are still municipalities willing to work and do what’s best for their citizens and there are still many, many people who care and are actively doing what they can to improve matters.

## CONCLUSION

Winston Churchill once famously said: “we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” McLuhan’s Fordham University colleague, John Culkin generalized that statement as, “we shape our tools and thereafter they shape us (Strate, 2001)”. This astute observation could easily be extended beyond buildings and tools, to encompass all things, including objects. In *Designing things: A Critical Introduction to the Culture of Objects*, Prasad Boradkar (2010) wrote: “Therefore, in addition to being designed by us, things in turn design us,” while Benzecry (2015) feels that “objects are the end result of long-term processes of stabilization, in which the actual material object (...) is both a result and yet a key co-producer of its own generation.”

There is little doubt, as we have seen, that temporary Lebanese cultural objects and services have shaped the way Lebanese society functions to a profound extent, but they have hardly been part of any form of stabilization, merely long-term transitional tools in the over-extended journey to the next stage the Lebanese are still striving to reach. Perhaps the difference between an object that becomes a result and key co-producer of



its own generation and one that is purely transitional is its “temporariness” or a people’s admittance of it as such.

There is no telling how many years must pass before a temporary cultural object stops being viewed as “temporary”, and perhaps holding on to the term “temporary” is just another way of keeping alive the hope that things will change for the better one day, and will not gradually fade into becoming the norm.

Awaiting the ultimate solution, the Lebanese survivor impulse dictates the use of a small array of temporary cultural objects and services as part of our daily routine and environment, but under the visually scarred landscape of a country and the apparent conditioning of an entire nation rumbles the much stronger will to not just survive, but to live better lives.

The question that remains unanswered is how difficult the transition to “normality” is likely to be, and whether the most visible and ubiquitous “temporary” object itself, the disjoncteur, will still scar Lebanese streets long after it has become redundant, as another form of ruin from a difficult past, much like many of the “lace buildings” which are a reminder of the civil war now stand as emblematic landmarks.

Will the Zahle model be gradually replicated throughout the entire country until each district localizes its electricity supply, making the object permanent and legal and hence less of a “feared master” on the street, until continuous 24-hour electricity becomes the norm again? Or will the “generator mafia” win that war and cause corruption to increase and its vicious circle to go on indefinitely?

Ultimately, it is the new generations and those to come who will define and decide what Lebanese identity is and if the mark left by temporary cultural objects will become “time-soluble” or indelible.

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# WAYFINDING IN BOURJ HAMMOUD

**MARLYSE CHAMOUN**

Lebanese University, Lebanon. **E:** chamounmarlyse@hotmail.com

## ABSTRACT

The paper has a look at the signage in Lebanon, precisely at BOURJ HAMMOUD ARAX street region Armenian citizen in the year 2010; it reaches the topic concerning typography issue in addresses and the names of the streets. The paper discusses the way finding in particular, and the perception of signs in environmental psychology, in order to analyze the architectural urban. It tackles the complexity of the observation while reading the letters on a sign or seeking for an address or an existing arrow signs in BOURJ HAMMOUD- ARAX's streets. The research examines the function of these signs and the way finding which should be placed all over the area and around it, as well as the function of its purpose. The point is to emphasis on the Chaos happening in this city by its urban architecture, and the noise that is produced by the street circulation, as well as the point is to highlight on the way of Reading the city in silence, according to an observation in these streets ARAX noticeably, signs are quiet around BOURJ HAMMOUD, an experimental question has lifted up, and the question is : if you ask for an address, you will be guided by hand waving by the citizens of the region, this is why I ended by considering that the signs in this region are noiseless with a silent language of normative typography written on metal boards or durable materials, if you ever thought of following it, maybe you will get lost, the discernment of signage in this area is quit absent, for this paper I undertake the gestalt theory of perception which was improved in 1974, when he describes and makes clear experiments of visual perception that are related to the [bi-dimensional] field. In this essay I discuss the field of [tri-dimensional space], stressing on the illustration characteristics of the letters written on signs (normative typography), imagining the building as a visible and concrete design in the urban place, studying the map of the region, with its clatter, with its noise in the streets, reading also the typographic Landscape, observing the (people talking, guiding, singing, drinking coffee, Armenian speaking, driving etc...) further more I accentuate the chaos in the streets of BOURJ HAMMOUD which is habited by the Armenian people as it is mentioned above.

## KEYWORDS

Street signage, way-finding, Bourj Hammoud

# WAY FINDING IN BOURJ HAMMOUD

## ABSTRACT

The paper has a look at the signage in Lebanon, precisely at BOURJ HAMMOUD ARAX street region Armenian citizen in the year 2010; it reaches the topic concerning typography issue in addresses and the names of the streets. The paper discusses the way finding in particular, and the perception of signs in environmental psychology, in order to analyze the architectural urban. It tackles the complexity of the observation while reading the letters on a sign or seeking for an address or an existing arrow signs in BOURJ HAMMOUD- ARAX's streets. The research examines the function of these signs and the way finding which should be placed all over the area and around it, as well as the function of its purpose. I ended by considering that the signs in this region are noiseless with a silent language of normative typography written on metal boards or durable materials, if you ever thought of following it, maybe you will get lost, the discernment of signage in this area is quit absent, for this paper I undertake the gestalt theory of perception which was improved in 1974, when he describes and makes clear experiments of visual perception that are related to the [bi-dimensional] field. In this essay I discuss the field of [tri-dimensional space], stressing on the illustration characteristics of the letters written on signs (normative typography), imagining the building as a visible and concrete design in the urban place, studying the map of the region, with its clutter, with its noise in the streets, reading also the typographic Landscape, observing the (people talking, guiding, singing).

## BOURJ HAMMOUD PERCEPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:

"The city of Bourj Hammoud is located on Lebanon's Mediterranean coast, 2 km east of central Beirut. The city is dynamic and industrious, Bourj Hammoud suffers from a large number of environmental nuisances due to its location at the edge of Beirut, Lebanon's capital city. It is a slums' area of suburbs.

For this paper research I am trying to highlight on the chaos, the noise and the missing way finding in the streets of ARAX BOURJ HAMMOUD, in addition to put on spot the designed banners and signs that lack the proper typography and design, moreover, to put in charge the charm of the streets despite all the mentioned above besides, to focus on the reaction and the behavior of the visitors when visiting the place, consequently, people will love the place or they hate it.

Are the foreign visitors of BOURJ HAMMOUD feeling comfortable by walking in and around its streets?

Is there any familiarity among the visitors and the signs in the streets of BOURJ HAMMOUD that lead the visitors to the intended destination?

Are the existing signs and banners designed by designers or typographers?

## CONCLUSION

As I generally allude to Roland Barthes in his book the Empire of signs, I may say that the city that Barthes is depicting is comparative with its condition in what concerns way finding to BOURJ HAMMOUD ARAX, there, in this city you may need to orientate yourself, you need to find the locale independent from anyone else, you need to find and watch its road by person on foot walking, I may say too, that, this turbulent, messy city could draw in the guests in an exceptional way, at any rate this city is not neutral and balanced, regardless of the possibility that we consider the confusion and the disorder are identified with contrary vitality, despite everything it have its appeal by after result, or by nostalgia, it makes you overlook the confusion and visit it one more at the end of the day.

## key words:

way finding, environmental behavior, signage design.

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Ghislaine VERRHIEST , Patrick FOURMIGUE , Bernard GUÉZO , Raffi KOK-HOGLANIAN. Centre d'Etudes Techniques de l'Équipement Méditerranée (CETE) - France 2 Centre d'Etudes sur les Réseaux, les Transports, l'Urbanisme et les constructions publiques (CERTU) - France 3 Deputy-Mayor of Bourj Hammoud - Lebanon.

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Figure 2 photos of street numbers for postmen. Photographer: Marlyse Chamoun 2010.



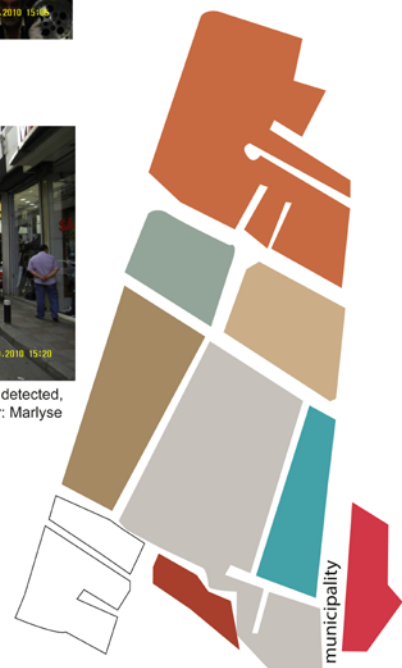
Figure 3, City Street Arax Sectors. Photographer: Marlyse Chamoun 2010.



Figure 5, no signs and way findings are detected, Bourj Hammoud suburbs. Photographer: Marlyse Chamoun 2010.

## Author:

Marlyse Chamoun





**TRACK 2**

## **T2** REIMAGINING CITY STREET: THE REAL AND THE VIRTUAL

Track chair | **Professor OGNEN MARINA**  
Faculty of Architecture, Ss. Cyril and Methodius  
Co-chair | **Professor PAUL JAHSHAN**  
FHUM, NDU

### **DESCRIPTION**

The dominant notion of world globalization has emphasized the horizontality of the process of diffusion of urbanity flattening the imagery in the contemporary urban landscape. We are witnesses of urbanization in which the categories of inside and outside disappear and there is no longer any clear “outside” or “inside” to the emergent urban fabric. The fading and re-emerging borders of these new urban conditions in the cities are redrawing the new and multidimensional Nolli’s map of contemporary cities. The inversion through which the public domain is privatized and the private realm emerges as a new public space, where civic activism is practiced with new digital and communication tools is urging for re-defining and re-imagining the domain of the commons.

The public realm of the streets is the space where everything is connected in a seamless whole. It is the place where the interior space of the buildings could be connected and re-functionalized due to its public and communal role. This position enables us to consider the urban street as one of the main devices for the diffusion of urbanity, while providing the cohesive and connective tissue of the horizontal and non-figurative city.

The current debate surrounding the imagery of city streets, the narratives and the virtuality behind it could be explored through architecture, planning, design, art, music, literature, fiction, philosophy, ICT and other disciplines by using insights and contributions dealing with the re-imagining of the reality and virtuality of city streets. This track encourages polemical research, insightful designs and projective mapping of narratives with new visions, imagery and concepts as an outcome that reflects the overarching and yet autonomous visions of the real and virtual urban spaces at the level of the city street.

### **KEYWORDS**

Future cities/cultures, utopia/dystopia, private and collective domain; real and virtual, networks and social media, spaces and places, scenarios, narratives.





# TRANSPOSING HAPTIC EXPERIENCE OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS ONTO THE URBAN STREET: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY IN KUNMING, CHINA

**PATRICK DEVLIEGER**

KU Leuven Belgium. **E:** patrick.devlieger@kuleuven.be

**BEATRICE PRINSIER MAALOUF**

Independent Researcher Belgium. **E:** praha.maalouf@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

This article considers the interaction between visually impaired persons and urban public spaces in Kunming, China. A series of anthropological explorations on how visually impaired outdoor massage therapists and street singers negotiate and occupy the streets of Kunming form the central subjects of this paper. The human body, touch, sound, smell and movement are some of the elements examined in the interaction between the visually impaired person and the city space. Set within the anthropological contextualisation of disability, space and grey zones, this paper is underpinned through the theoretical understanding of the transmodern.

Through this, the research tackles its central question; namely, how an urban space may be negotiated and occupied by visually disabled persons, who through their inherent potentiality, also re-negotiate liminal zones in order to create new forms of experiencing the public space.

## KEYWORDS

Visual disability, transmodern, haptic urban experience

## INTRODUCTION

Anthropological research focusing on persons with disabilities has been multi-faceted. By employing the concept of the transmodern this research looks at the means by which visually impaired massage therapists and singers, through their body movements and senses, occupy and transform public urban space in Kunming, China. The transmodern perspective goes beyond the “secular-scientific-hierarchical-rational-approach” of the modern (Luyckx 1999, p. 975). Instead, the transmodern framework takes into consideration the possibilities of transposing ideas and technologies. Thus, it accounts for the symbiotic interaction between the local and global bearing into account the historical. Most importantly, the transmodern focuses on the contradictions within a particular phenomenon (Luyckx 1999), such as within the disabled body itself rather than just a conflict between the abled versus the disabled body.

By tackling the issue of disability from a transmodern frame of reference, this research proffers alternative outlooks. Foremost, ideas of the transmodern evoke concepts of global connectivity. Disability affects virtually every person at one point in time, hence human beings are considered more as “Temporarily Able Bodies” as opposed to disabled by birth or due to an accident (Goodley 2011, p.3). Additionally, the transmodern concept encompasses engendered politics within the issue at hand. The last decade of the 20th century saw a surge of resistance and mass movements with persons with disability (Charlton 1998). Most relevantly, the idea of the transmodern does not limit itself, as other modes of understanding disability do, to de-constructing socially set disability norms and hindrances. Rather, the transmodern paradigm allows thinking in an amalgamating crossing-point format of trends, identifications, experiences, and interpretations of modernity, personality, social, political and economic interactivity (Goodley 2011).

Nonetheless this research builds upon previously conducted ones. The first of these is the Blindness and the Multi-Sensorial City project carried out in Leuven in 2003. This project aimed at investigating the haptic accessibility and appreciation of the city (Devlieger et al. 2006). The second research, fathomed the relationship between visually blind Brussels metro users and the public transport authorities’ adaptation to their needs (Devlieger & Strickfaden 2012). The common thread upholding both these anthropological exercises is that there exists a diverse means of appreciation of the open urban space created by visually impaired persons. More importantly, both enquiries point to the active transforming role the disabled body plays out in a public area. The conclusions of these anthropological works present a reliable starting point to further this form of research within a specific Chinese urban environment.

Based on the above, this project is constructed on a parallel anthropological research conducted in conjunction with Yunnan University students. Its central interlocutors were the visually impaired massage therapists and street singers in Kunming. The aim of this paper is to articulate three interlinked loci. First, it builds an understanding of the performative presence of a disabled body and its occupation and navigation of an urban space. Second, it attempts to comprehend the re-negotiation of the niches created by the disabled persons’ cultural participation through their specific vocation as massage therapists or street singers. Third, it aims to discern the means through which the disabled body humanizes a public space.

This article is divided into five major sections. It starts by defining the ethnographic approach utilized followed by an exposition of the two basic concepts: disability as formulated by various models; and the concepts of space as viewed through ideas of

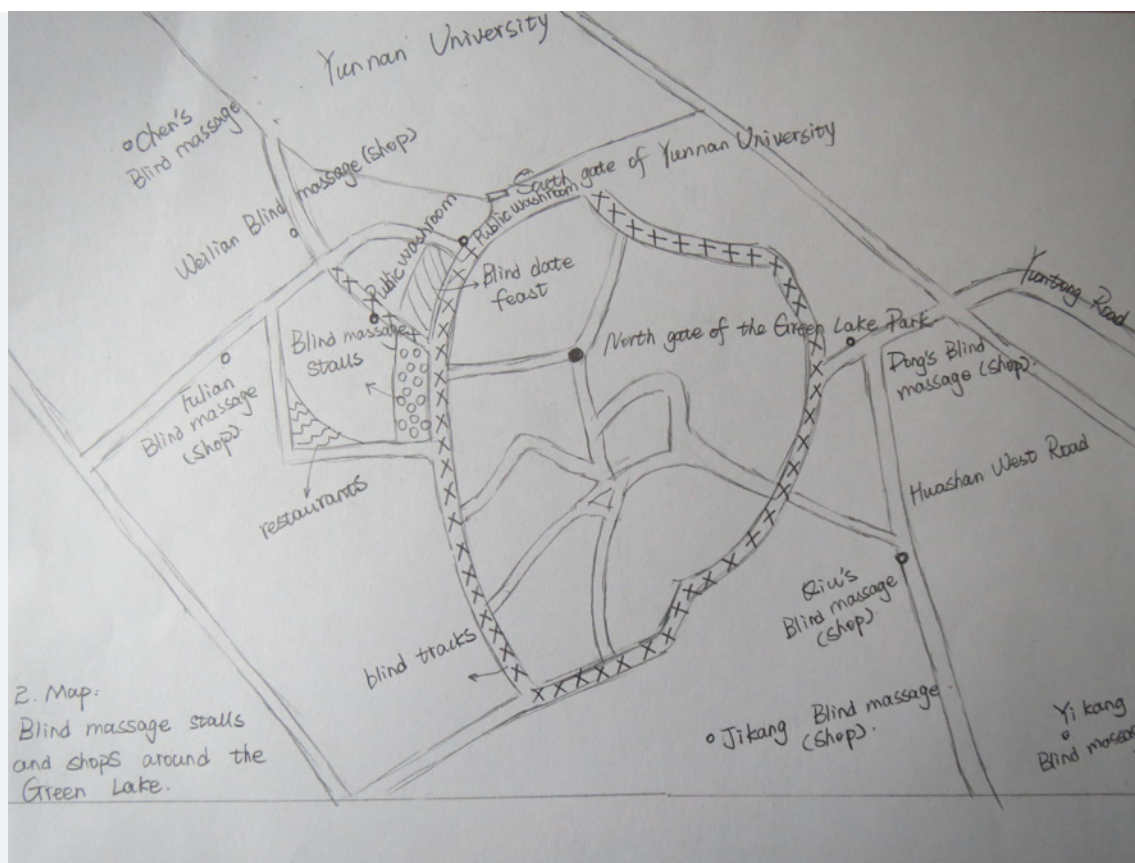
margins and grey zones in public space settings. Attention to these guiding terms provides a basis for articulating the semiologic meanings evoked by the body of a visually disabled person. This is followed by an outline of the prevalent disabilities discourse in China. Subsequently, this formative background information allows for an appreciation of the two presented main case studies. Namely that of the outdoor visually impaired massage therapist earning a living through a legal job, and the visually impaired singers earning their livelihood through culturally accepted forms of begging. By focussing on the visually impaired masseurs and singers, the research delves into the role that the disabled body has in re-negotiating and re-imagining the city street utilising culturally accepted vocations. Within this context, the visually impaired adult is considered as a performative actor challenging the imagined liminal areas in the urban space. The paper concludes that the condition of blindness within the Kunming public space contests a culturally presumed state of haplessness. Rather this research indicates that visually impaired persons not only negotiate an in-between aperture within a public area; but additionally, actively create a liminal niche which renders meaning to their livelihood. As such the visually impaired body re-formulate the comprehension of a public space that was not necessarily designed to accommodate their movements, trajectories or even work space.

## ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The ethnography of this project is based on both multidisciplinary and team approaches. The research combined several methods which encompassed observations, interviews supported with visual techniques such as photography and filming. Interviews were carried out with colleagues who had knowledge of blind massages. This information was enhanced with a direct experience of indoor and outdoor blind massage. The research was a combination of individual research and a collaboration with Chinese students in the context of a course in ethnographic fieldwork taught by the first author at Yunnan University. The first author discussed with students, conducted fieldwork on his own by walking the city, observing visually impaired people, taking photographs, filming at select occasions and experiencing blind massage. The first author carried out the research in three subsequent visits to Kunming in 2013, 2014 and during a sabbatical from September to December 2015. The research included in total thirty visually impaired masseurs and singers.

Even though blind massage has been the attention of German visual anthropologist Keifenheim's documentary "Touching Eyes" (2001) and was the main theme of producer Lou's popular film "Blind Massage" (2014), these visual works have not much inspired this specific ethnographic research. Instead, it was influenced by the presence of a foreign anthropologist and Chinese students who took on the possibility of engaging in urban ethnography, uncommon within the Chinese context. The anthropologist and students engaged in direct experiences in the city's various locations where the blind people's occupation and navigation occurs. Kunming proffered numerous and diverse locations; namely, the streets and overpasses within Yunnan university's proximity, the city's commercial and historical centre, with its traffic-free squares and other streets of which Nanping Street is the most well-known, and the area around the Green Lake (Cui Hu) Park, dotted with restaurants, cafés, and street eateries, famous as a social meeting point where popular music can be heard, dance is ubiquitously performed, and people are seen leisurely walking and gathering. Based upon the ethnographic observations, it was noted that people with visual impairments tend to participate in both more culturally and historically oriented zones to what may be deemed as more leisure and park environment areas<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> People with other forms of disability, such as hearing and physical disabilities, also participate in these same areas; however, this is beyond the scope of this paper.



**Figure 1.** Illustrative map of blind massage stands around

## DISABILITY, MARGINS, AND GREY ZONES

The whole conceptualisation of this research is rendered through the perception of the existence of an idea of disability. The transmodern lens allows studying a disability phenomenon whilst still encompassing all former anthropological disability paradigms. The earliest, the religious or moral model, related to the feeling of compassion and charity towards persons with a disability. Although less prevalent today, in some cultures, this model still carries with it the burden of stigma. For instance, through his anthropological work on urban access for persons with disabilities in Ecuador, Rattray noted that much access to public space for these Ecuadorian is limited largely through the prevailing idea that disability brings a “sense of shame” (2013, p. 31). The second broad model, the medical model, emerged with the prominence of scientific research and technology. Within disability studies it was reflected through the belief to cure, rehabilitate and even correct a disability (Devlieger et al. 2007). Although, no longer considered as the main means of understanding persons with disabilities, its legacy is still palpable. For example, in section four of the 1990 General Provisions of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons declares that, “The state shall provide disabled persons with special assistance by adopting supplementary methods and supportive measures with a view to alleviating or eliminating the effects of their disabilities and external barriers and ensuring the realization of their rights” (ILO 2016). Emerging from the US Civil Rights movements, the social model takes into account the social, environmental and institutional outlooks on disability. Its main argumentation points to the societal failures in adapting to the needs of disabled people. However, once these have been identified then the society’s role is to provide tools for removing

barriers and increasing accessibility for disabled persons in public life (Shakespeare 2013, pp. 216-217). In the case of China this is reflected through China's Disabled Person's Federation (CDPF). Set up by Deng Pufang, the former Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping's eldest son lamed by the Red Guards, it engages in facilitating access, for persons with disabilities within the Chinese education system and workforce (Dauncey 2013). Stemming from the social model, the cultural paradigm proffers a space for the disabled individual characteristic identity by challenging pre-defined accepted norms and instead tackles differences. Anthropological research utilizing the cultural model for understanding disability has indicated a form of margin, or border zone, in which persons with a disability create a formative space. A practical aspect of this application is reflected in viewing the disabled body as a transforming agent within a spatial setting (Titchkosky 2009).

It is this formulation of space that sets the common ground between the anthropological study of disability and urban studies. From Augé's perspective, a space may be dichotomously delineated between what he termed a place or what, "can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with ideas"; versus the non-place which is unconcerned with the three elements: relation, history, and identity (1995, pp. 77-78). This form of linear demarcation renders the understanding of the presence of a disabled person's body particularly that of visually disabled persons, within what would be assumed a non-place, such as a public street, difficult to account for. For example, the Brussels metro, a so called non-place using Augé's argument, was due to the tactile usage by visually impaired commuters humanized (Devlieger & Strickfaden 2012). Simultaneously, the hums, chants and voices of the visually impaired street singers serve to imprint a character and animate the public space. Hence, these tactile and acoustic imprints render the idea of a public space more akin to Lefebvre's idea of the constructed space (2014). In his rendering, what may have been meant for a specific activity may be transformed by parallel yet not previously accounted for human activities (Low 2003). To illustrate, the urban planners in Kunming did not take into consideration the potential burgeoning of outdoor massage therapists. As such, the urban public space is not simply a construct of direct elements such as legislation and urban planning; but is equally an outcome of indirect components, such as the creation of an alternative space formed through invested opportunities by the disabled body (Roulstone et al. 2014).

In more specific terms, the margins are the formative upholding denominator between this anthropological work and the urban space. Margins are rendered possible through ideas about border zones which even though at first geographically planned as set and rigid, are de facto malleable. Moreover, quoting Ingold's work on meshwork, Green remarks that the by-product of the border concept produces meaning because it is the non-systematic, disorganised and fluctuating experiences within the in-between space where meaning may be extracted (2015). This idea is furthered by Tsing, basing her argument on the works of Foucault and Gramsci, elaborates that these form of capricious interstices often evoke ideas of oscillation and volatility. From this standpoint, she furthers the pertinence of studying the marginal zones since they paradoxically emphasize on one hand the restraints and on the other the potential of persons in vulnerable social standing, such as persons with disabilities (1994). No doubt, the conceptualization of margins evokes the opaque idea of a grey zone. Initially, the idea of these interpretive zones stemmed from the works of Levi about the survivalist tactics of Nazi concentration camp inmates and their SS guards (Edkins 2000). Yet these emblematic grey zones have been synthesized and used to describe other daily social phenomena (Knudsen and Frederiksen 2015). Less extreme formulations of grey zones have been largely used to describe illicit cross-border economies (Green 2015). Moreover, grey zones, as



analytical tools, have been used to describe the uncertain ethical issues in the health system (Blum 2010). Consequently, by addressing the annotative, and hence less extreme form of grey zones, this work questions the daily interaction in these zones by visually impaired adults, through their tactile and acoustic trajectories.

Within the context of this work marginality is palpable at three interlocking levels. The first tier is the outwardly urban space. Even if the streets of Kunming may not have been built with the disabled body in mind, the appropriation of the street by the visually impaired persons has created a form of in-between accommodative zones. These liminal zones are materialistically denoted by the footpaths where the visually impaired masseurs and singers negotiate their space with the able-bodied pedestrians and other commuters. These in-between niches may be perceived as margins where, as Tsing remarks, 'dissonant' encounters are generated (1994, p. 279). The second level is also physical yet related to the bodily presence of disabled persons in an urban space. Their bearing and comportment is obviously not static. Rather, for disabled adults manoeuvring about an urban-scape resembles a form of "performance" (Hadley 2014, p.2). Unlike non-disabled persons, a disabled person's mere presence within a public space accentuates their distinctiveness. This assumed performance takes on various guises such as a guiding cane, or personal ones like a guiding hand on the shoulder of a fellow singer or musician. These performative semblances reflect a specific socio-cultural role in a liminal public space. The third echelon is represented by embodied internal marginality within disabled individuals. Developments in social sciences gave rise to the occupational role of the body. This created an interest to look at the body as a readable slate upon which signs, images and symbols are interpreted; but which at the same time emanates significant symbols (Sanders 2006). Furthermore, it has been established within anthropology that a disabled body operates within divergent and changing definitions, signs, interpretations and ethical variables which are common to the culture where he or she lives (Deshen 1992). Thus in order to contextualise the latter level, this work, by looking at the semiology of the disabled body, aims at showing how the liminal space is actually developed by visually impaired adults who internalise within themselves boundaries delineated by various competencies.

## **A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE CHINESE DISABILITY DISCOURSE**

As this research is based in China, the existing Chinese discourse on disability was accounted for. According to Xun the contemporary Chinese recognition of disability derives from the eugenics of the modern, healthy, productive and economically valuable body. With some ideological changes and nuances, the Communist party's discourse, similar to its predecessor's Republican, aims at cultivating a prosperous and effective Chinese body which is seen as a reflection of the national development (Xun 2002). Hence, in what is referred to as China's modern era, the less able-bodied has continuously been handled from a medical perspective (Xun 2002). Yet concurrently, with the rise of China as a Communist power embracing capitalist economic strategies, there has been a cultural revival of the forefathers. This is embraced through the re-emergence, even on the state level, of Confucius and Buddhist ideals. Stemming from her research on disabled persons' correspondence and letters, Dauncey has noted a specificity in interpreting their positions. Although influenced by western concepts of "inclusion" of disabled persons, the understanding of inclusiveness by disabled Chinese leans more towards the need to be part of the wider society and economic life (2012, p. 313).



As this research's data was collected in Kunming, then the interlocking of the local cultural, its inter-activeness with the wider world as well as its inward historical outlook are captured by utilizing the transmodern concept.

Thus positioning this paper within the transmodern framework has allowed surpassing the over-saturation of meanings related to the idea of culture rendering it too broad to meaningfully contextualise an anthropological study on disability. Moreover, since transmodern ideas account for a global hybrid interdependence, they provide a rationale of western theories' influence on non-western cultures. In her research on the Chinese discourse on disability, Dauncey mentions that, "Western ideas and practices on disability cannot be overlooked since they have contributed greatly to the shaping of Chinese understandings of disability" (Dauncey 2013, p.133). At the same time, a transmodern perspective does not deny that modern renderings of disability are also infused by pre-modern impacts. As such, regional developments are always the outcome of both local and global influences and a transmodern view privileges an understanding of the interaction and exchange between both.

## THE CASE STUDIES

This section presents two ethnographic case studies. The first group deals with the blind massage therapists who are legally self-employed. The second case describes the visually impaired street singers, who make a living through begging. Since interlocutors in both groups are deprived of their visual sense, they tend to employ their hands and voices in their occupation. In addition, the employment of hands and voices is culturally embedded. Moreover, their similar disability is not the only binding element between these two observed groups. The occupation and negotiation of the urban public space, their appropriation of the liminal space, and their strive for a meaningful social well-being within the public niche also form shared denominators.

Although tracing their origins to the 8th century Buddhist monk, Jianzhen, it was not until the last decade of the 20th century, that blind masseurs burgeoned across China's main cities. In addition to the aforementioned efforts of the CDPF, two important events stimulated the growth of blind massage therapy. Thanks to the 1987 Blind Massage Conference, blind massage therapy gained an official status. Nearly a decade later, under the CDPF auspices, the China Association of the Blind Practitioners was established. Inherently, this implied structuring of this particular trade not only within economic parameters, but also through the institutionalization of professional academies for the blind and fully accredited vocational massage training (Lewis et al., 1997).

Blind masseurs in Kunming operate indoors within massage parlours and outdoors in the public space. In line with the topic of this paper, only the case of the outdoor blind therapists is discussed. The ethnographic teamwork observations and visual documentation by the first author have been enhanced with the largely informal discussions carried out by students in Chinese with the massage therapists.

Often dressed in a white overcoat and armed with a stool for their customers, the outdoor blind therapists advertise on a board the type of offered massages and prices. In Kunming, most of these massage therapists are located within bustling street loci, such as in Nanping Street and along the Dianchi Lake. Their main clientèle pool is made of health conscious Chinese and tourists. In some instances potential clients are lured by the overall appearance of the massage therapist, in others it is the case of the satisfied returning customer. Along

with the economic, historical and social prominence of the public area, accessibility also features as a selection criteria. None of the interlocutors had a white cane. Instead all relied on family members or friends to accompany them to their selected working outdoor space. Family members also played a role in bringing in midday meals.

Upon selecting the masseur, the client chooses the form of massage he or she desires. Wide ranging, the selection is based either upon a specific body part, such as head, neck, and shoulder, or a specific ailment, like shoulder pain, or the entire body. Next the client and masseur agree on the duration of the massage. With the form and length of the massage, the price is agreed with the client. Due to their impairment, blind masseurs either request the client to keep track of time; however, in most cases they accurately monitor the passage of time by the well-practised massage routines, or they rely on the assistance of fellow masseurs.

Based on student research it was noted that from the clients' point of view, blind massage therapy is seen as a respectable form of outdoor occupation. Morally, influenced by Chinese Buddhist ideals, the clients feel a sense of doing a good deed through monetary payment to someone they see as in need. Culturally, they do not feel a sense of shame in exposing their bodies to a person who does not 'see' it, albeit that they remain fully clothed. This is further enhanced by their belief that a visually impaired person, by developing other senses, principally that of touch, is most suitable to conduct a massage. In this sense the presence of the blind masseurs in the public space is morally and culturally sanctioned. Yet, it is the urban managers, responsible for the public order, who form a counterpoint within this urban-scape. Many times, through various means, they apprehend the blind masseurs for illegal occupation of an open space. It is within this juncture that the blind masseurs negotiate their positions. On one hand, their occupational training is supported on the government level, yet the authorities limit the spatial zones in which they can conduct their livelihood.

Most interlocutors, particularly the Chinese, undergo a massage treatment for health reasons. Using various traditional relaxation techniques, the blind masseurs apply their strong fingers on the head, back, neck, arms, fingers and legs. The client's body is then bent, twisted, squeezed and prodded. Naturally, as this is set on the street, this is a completely public massage, with no sense of privacy. Whilst the fully clothed body is rubbed-down and kneaded, the body remains exposed to the sounds, views, and smells of the surrounding street.



**Figure 2:**  
Outdoor blind  
massage,  
Nanping Street,  
Kunming

A commonality shared between the visually impaired massage therapists and their singer counterparts are the urban public spaces of Kunming. Also blind singers' performance on the street is entrenched within the Chinese popular lifestyle. Yet, unlike the outdoor blind massage therapists, visually impaired singers do not carry out a legally structured and vocationally backed practice. Rather the blind street singers perform a culturally accepted form of begging. Usually these street singers are elderly persons. They often sing popular songs from 1970s and 1990s, usually songs they knew from their younger years and well-known among their listeners. Moreover, as noted by some of interlocutors' interviews, street singers, unlike the blind massage therapists, do not earn a minimum wage through begging.

**In The Practice of Everyday Life**, de Certeau, asserts the creation of meaning through the act of exploring the city on foot. He furthers that this body activity imprints new imaginations and creates new meanings (1984). Akin to other Chinese cities, Kunming also has its own water feature. In the evenings, the surroundings of the Green Lake Park become animated with opened tea houses, outdoor eateries, strolling persons, elderly persons practising Tai Chi and other traditional group fitness exercises, and group dancing. Among these, blind street singers are seen on the quieter and sometimes darker places singing popular songs usually accepting a small fee from the passer-by or avid listeners. The manoeuvring of some mobile blind street singers is akin to the Buddhist monks asking for alms. Walking aligned behind one another, the singers are usually accompanied by a visually-impaired singer or musician who negotiate their paces by not only feeling the surrounding sound vibrations but themselves singing tunes.

## CONCLUSION

Since the concept of the transmodern represents an interlinked, non-hierarchical interaction of simultaneous events, it helps in understanding the transformational processes that identify grey zones. Concurrently, the impaired body occupies both an internal as well as an external grey zone. The former deals with embodied, diverging capabilities. Within the studied examples, not only was it noted that the visual disparity defines an economic occupational zone but also a profession. The latter grey zone deals with the bodily movements of the visually impaired whether in reference to their displacement within the city, to reach their workspace, or to the their physical presence in their defined work zones both as singers or masseurs. Taken together the two grey zones represent fundamental opportunities for self-fulfilment on the urban street, which otherwise may not have been available to them. On one hand, due to the physical impairment, the visually impaired in Kunming have restricted vocational and work opportunities, on the other hand, because of the impairment, liminal options are created as outdoor masseurs, an accepted job, or as singers, an acceptable form of begging. Furthermore this acceptance is reciprocal, as sighted above, both by the visually impaired practitioners and their clients or listeners.

Essentially, this anthropological research utilized transmodern tools in order to look at the different modern modalities, like the sensorial experiences, materiality and political interpretations, that are played out within a public arena in order to bring about a novel comprehension of the public space from the visually disabled persons' perspective. It is on these broad premises that the research noted three main interlinked levels in which the disabled masseurs and street singers navigate and occupy Kunming's urban spaces.

On the street, within the limits of the footpath, and in the demarcated confines of the entertainment and relaxation zone along the lake, the legally practising masseur therapist and the street singers leave the most tangible imprint. By offering a requested health service, the blind massage therapists actively engage economically in a public area. They tread a fine line between their legal job and opaque presence on the streets. Equally, the blind street singers, through songs, chants and music animate the open space, whilst hoping to gain economically through an acceptable form of begging. In this sense, the blind represent a form of positive aspect of their body, even if it may culturally be considered as negative. Moreover, beyond this valorized position, the visually impaired persons in Kunming, whilst occupying a socially created urban space, they also construct opportunities they may have been previously unavailable for them.

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## VIRTUAL REALITY: THIS IS NOT A SHOPFRONT

**IAN MONTGOMERY and RUTH BROLLY**

Ulster University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK.

E: jai.montgomery@ulster.ac.uk, brolly-m2@email.ulster.ac.uk

### ABSTRACT

A recent phenomenon in Northern Ireland has been an all show and no substance approach to imposing visual veneers on the commercial cityscapes of run-down parts of the city. Many of these initiatives have been initiated prior to a major tourist or public interest event both in small towns and in key arterial routes into the city. For example, the G8 summit in rural County Fermanagh initiated a government-backed campaign of covering over empty shop fronts with fake printed facades in order to present an impression of thriving commercial activity to the world's press. Similarly, the 2014 Giro D'Italia cycling race routes were a key government priority for the same visual cleansing treatment while the world's sporting press broadcast images of Belfast worldwide.

Often, disused and decaying shop fronts are covered over by imagined facades displaying static commercial activity via lettering and images. This has the bizarre effect of creating an environment in keeping with movie sets like *The Truman Show* or *Pleasantville*. This paper draws on primary photographic evidence and other academic and government sources to illustrate the phenomenon of commercial artificiality in socially deprived areas of Belfast and compares and contrasts pre- and post-façade applications as a way of showing the impact of government-backed visual cleansing.

### KEYWORDS

Virtual, shopfront, commercial artificiality, Belfast



Since the signing of Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement in 1998, defining an end to the 'Troubles'<sup>1</sup>, Belfast has seen continued reimagining initiatives to gentrify the city centre in order to encourage tourism and generate commerce. The Belfast Urban Area Plan has promoted the 'cultural normality of Belfast' (Neill and Schedler, 2001: 46) with a 'new city centre local plan based almost exclusively on image' (Neill and Schedler, 2001:46), modern shops and businesses in the city centre have been 'marshalled like icons to oppose the array of images painted on the gable walls of housing areas in the city, which portray divisive identity symbols of the past' (Neill and Schedler, 2001: 47). Although the key target for reimagining has been the city centre, the ramifications of such city planning have extended beyond the city centre onto the city's surrounding streets. As a result of what has been an amnesia-inducing and culturally cleansing reimagining of place there have been far-reaching implications for the built environments of the city's communities located on these streets.



**Figure 1:** Fake shopfront on Belfast's Newtownards Road, an increasing phenomenon in Belfast

Architectural initiatives have seen a city formerly largely comprised of low rise red brick Victorian buildings transformed into a postmodern vision of a global city, yet the image of place is dependent not solely on structures. Over and above the built environment the city's commercial signage, traditionally denotative of place, has received culturally neutralising interventions. Global brands, for a long time absent in Belfast, now dominate the city centre, identical to those on any global city; Apple, Gap, House of Fraser, Starbucks, Debenhams. These complex and well established design narratives are absent on surrounding streets, where commerce speaks of local economic agendas and signage would be, 'normally', created by local stakeholders, with modest aspirations.

Recent measures aimed to rectify the marked visual and economic decline on streets surrounding the city centre have seen bespoke signage replaced with mass-produced corporate signage which conforms to a narrow visual plan stipulated by local government<sup>2</sup>. Such interventions desensitise the richness and variation which represents a place, particularly when place specific and cultural coding systems are disposed of. Further to these acts of visual/cultural cleansing in streets whose diverse conglomeration of signs presented rich and expressive community values, culture, history and myth, photographs have been placed on derelict buildings to mimic active businesses, annotated by signage that is equally redundant, other than reinforcing the faux rebranding of place.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Troubles' started in the late 1960s, lasting to the signing of the Belfast Agreement, in 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Belfast City Council Renewing the Routes. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business/regeneration/renewingtheroutes.aspx>.

These fake shopfronts (Fig. 1) are a Northern Ireland-wide phenomenon, a veneer designed to cover up decaying high streets. In number, they have been steadily increasing and extending their presence since their introduction circa 2013. A transatlantic export, these fake shopfronts originated in New York in the 1980s, under Mayor Ed Koch<sup>3</sup> and have been adopted as a solution to visible economic decline by the now former Department for Social Development (DSD)<sup>4</sup>. In Northern Ireland fake shopfronts appeared prior to the much-anticipated G8 summit, in June of 2013, when County Fermanagh's district council sanctioned them as part of a £1m makeover in preparation for the event. The fake front initiative was 'aimed at undeveloped sites at the entrance to the town and then right throughout the county in terms of the other towns and villages...to make them look better and more aesthetically pleasing' (Hegarty, 2013). The American media dubbed the scene in the Fermanagh Lakeland at the time 'Fakeland' and this idea of a fake commercial landscape has now spread to other cities and towns, becoming increasingly apparent in less economically viable parts of Belfast.

This paper examines how intervention, neutralised signage and fake shop-fronts are being used to transform the built environment of Belfast and discusses the impact of this on society and culture. It provides photographic examples of fake frontages on Belfast's Newtownards Road, a key commercial corridor into the city, where marked socio-economic decline has prompted significant if not brutal alterations to the built fabric of the street. The images, taken from 2010 to present day, demonstrate the extent of alterations to the street, eradicating evidence of culture, history and myth, muting local voices and suppressing representations of group ideology, in a city where personal and community expression is integral to the identity of people and place.

## REIMAGING A FUTURE BELFAST

Since 1998, Belfast has seen significant transformation on a built environment scarred by decades of sectarian conflict. Modernisation programmes have included the renovation and building of new office, commercial and residential spaces in the city. The re-imaging of place was a corporate vision for neutrality and cultural inclusion, departing from at one time visible references to a sectarian past, in order to entice commerce and tourism. Retail regeneration has seen the creation of new commercial shopping centres, providing covered retail experiences and 'Disneyfied' (Erterp, 2009:269)<sup>5</sup> spaces. The Victoria Square Scheme (Fig 2) alone was a £300m (\$400m) urban regeneration project in Belfast city centre providing c. 800,000 sq ft of retail/leisure space over four floors, leisure units including restaurants, bars and cafes, c. 1,000 car parking spaces and 106 apartments<sup>6</sup>. The church-like glass-domed structure of Victoria Square rises above the traditional buildings in central Belfast, presenting itself as a non-secular place designed for consumerist worship.

Alongside planning developments for retail and residential units further initiatives aimed to update public spaces leading to and from new buildings. Belfast: Streets Ahead Programme, commencing in June 2007, completed 2011, included 14 city centre streets at a cost of £28m (\$38m), providing natural stone paving, street furniture, lighting, public

3 In 1982, New York City's Mayor Ed Koch caused a stir when he had workers put decals with plants and Venetian blinds over the windows of abandoned buildings in The Bronx to hide the blight. (Apr13, 2011) <https://baltimorebrew.com/2011/04/13/photo-essay-window-treatments-for-a-struggling-downtown/>.

4 A recent reshuffling of government departments in Northern Ireland has seen the former department for Social Development embraced under the banner of the new Department for Communities. <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/functions-new-department-communities>

5 Erterp explains disneyfication as 'a neologism taken from the name of the Walt Disney company to describe what some see as the way in which the principles of Disney theme parks are spreading throughout our societies'.

6 <http://retailproperty.cushwake.com/scheme/5054/Victoria-Square-Belfast>

art and an update of existing underground utilities<sup>7</sup>. As an extension of these public realm reimagining initiatives, further work was undertaken on key arterial routes into the city, commercial corridors which were once thriving local hubs for the communities of the city, now reflecting economic decline. These key roads are those travelled by visitors, tourists and shoppers to access the city. By camouflaging the decay of these routes those travelling to the city would experience what appears to be a revitalised economy of place, disguising otherwise palpable urban decay. Since 2004 a funded government initiative, which has come to be known as the Renewing The Routes Programme,<sup>8</sup> initially part of the Brighter Belfast Scheme, has had an impact on the appearance of the routes. The initial programme took place over a two-and-a-half year period, which was extended by a year, with funding of around £4.5m (\$6m), from the DSD. The programme was completed in 2010. Due to its perceived success – ‘external consultants carried out the programme evaluation and review. They evaluated the programme’s effectiveness, financing and efficiency to rate its value for money’<sup>9</sup> and it was further extended. Work has been undertaken on local regeneration projects and enhancing main roads.



**Figure 2:** A postmodern shopping experience under the dome of Victoria Square, Belfast.

Commercial frontages of hundreds of properties have now been ‘revitalised’ and ‘improvements’ made to miles of the city in what has been an ongoing process. Decisions on which premises to focus on are undertaken on a block-by-block basis, with those blocks of buildings broken by streets, ‘nodes’<sup>10</sup> most deemed to be in need of

7 Streets Ahead: Phase 1, <http://www.futurebelfast.com/streets-ahead-phase-1.html>.

8 Renewing The Routes Programme Belfast. <http://nws.euocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Belfast%20-%20Renewing%20the%20Routes.pdf>.

9 Belfast City Council Renewing The Routes. <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business/regeneration/renewingtheroutes.aspx>.

10 The Renewing The Routes programme employs the term ‘nodes’ as coined by Lynch. In *Image Of The City*, Lynch





**Figure 3:**  
The 'Spirit Of Belfast' public artwork, on approach to Victoria Square shopping centre

intervention, receiving work. Owners of premises are provided with a choice of three drawings providing signage solutions, and from these they were asked to choose a pre-vetted design. This apparent participation in the process has some semblance of democracy, however, a panel of government, business and Arts Council representatives ultimately decided the appearance of signage. Colour suggestions were received from architects involved (who change and have changed over the term of the project) depending on successful public tenders and procurement processes.

With each change in contract, different materials were sourced with solutions provided for signage and installed en-masse by the same group of creators. It is this process of decision-making that has ensured the eradication of local cultural codes on signage, such as letterform, colour, or imagery that might be traditionally associated with place. In visibly declining socio-economic environments the range of measures for intervention may range from signage alone, to painting of facades, or, where derelict properties are encountered, the installation of fake shopfronts.

## FAKE FRONTS AS A VENEER COVERING A SERIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC MALAISE

The tradition of making false facades to mask troubled real estate has a long history – going back to the fake settlements supposedly erected at the direction of Grigory Potyomkin to fool Russian Empress Catherine II during her visit to Crimea in 1787<sup>11</sup>. Architectural window dressing in America contemporarily originated circa 1982, under the direction of New York City's Mayor Ed Koch, who had workers put decals with plants and Venetian blinds over the windows of abandoned buildings in The Bronx to hide the blight<sup>12</sup>. Like 'Cardboard Rome' (Hughes, 1991:105)<sup>13</sup> fake fronts are subterfuge to

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defines nodes as points, 'strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is travelling. They may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or conversion of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another'. Lynch, K. (1973; 1960:47) *The image of the city*, Cambridge Mass.; London: M.I.T. Press. In Belfast nodes are blocks of Victorian terraces which have been adapted for commercial purposes.

11 The term 'Potemkin Village' derives from this now thought to be apocryphal tale. Defined as a pretentiously showy or imposing façade intended to mask or divert attention from an embarrassing or shabby fact or condition. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/potemkin-village>.

12 <https://baltimorebrew.com/2011/04/13/photo-essay-window-treatments-for-a-struggling-downtown/>

13 Hughes describes how 'when Hitler made his first state visit to Rome in the thirties, Mussolini had the last mile of railway track into the Stazione Terminal lined with fake apartment blocks'. Standing on scaffolding behind the

fool the visitor at a glance, (if, for example, travelling by vehicle through the route) but, despite sometimes having images of people in the windows, they are, when examined at close proximity, an obvious ruse. These fake fronts to commercial premises were designed to disguise vacant and/or derelict properties, yet after remaining in situ for just a couple of years the faded photographs on windows, or peeling paper, add to the perceived deterioration of the built environment that they were designed to hide.

There is undoubtedly a problem to be addressed, as high streets face continued economic pressure and display high rates of vacancy or dereliction. In Belfast, the arterial routes of the city are particularly affected as they have been, due to planning and major roads initiatives, combined with still-existing peace walls, commercially cut-off from the city centre. The isolated economies on these routes and often high unemployment, as well as continued, if sporadic, outbreaks of violence, ensure a continued blight to local urban environments. As a treatment for this, placing photographs over derelict properties is, at best, an unsatisfactory measure to confront continued serious socio-economic and societal decline.

A survey reported by the BBC in February 2012 stated that Northern Ireland has the 'highest town centre shop vacancy rate in the UK'<sup>14</sup>. The survey indicated that '14% of shops in Northern Ireland's high streets and shopping centres are empty, compared to the UK average of 11%'<sup>15</sup>. Another report indicated that 'almost a quarter of shops in Belfast are vacant...while across Northern Ireland, the number of empty shops has risen'<sup>16</sup>. The research behind the report, carried out by commercial property agency Lisney, suggested that '23% – or almost one in four shops in Belfast – are now lying vacant... in NI as a whole, the percentage of empty stores has reached 19%, meaning that almost one in five shops is empty'<sup>17</sup>. Further to these reports, an article in July, 2013 reported that fifteen Northern Ireland councils would 'share £1.5m from the Department of Environment (DoE) to tackle decay and dereliction in their areas'<sup>18</sup>. The article reported that the Environment Minister 'said the funds would be used to enhance the environment and in turn boost tourism and local trade'<sup>19</sup> to benefit local people, who 'will have the character of their built environment improved'<sup>20</sup>.

That action needs to be taken to address decline in urban environments is certain. If buildings and signage are not well maintained further socio-economic decline may occur, vandalism and crime rates may rise; poor maintenance may lead to further poor maintenance, dereliction may lead to further dereliction, 'broken window theory' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982)<sup>21</sup> may come into practice. Conversely, where community stakeholders can take pride in the appearance of the built environment and both buildings and signage are well-maintained this trend may be reversed; thus discouraging vandalism and crime, which becomes unacceptable to the community. Nevertheless, short-term measures, such as the fake fronts, are seldom considered to be a good solution and do not contribute

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blocks were hosts of people waving through faux windows in order to further convince of the charade.

14 BBC News (20/02/12) Northern Ireland Has Highest Rate Of Vacant Shops In Uk. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-17101432>.

15 *ibid.*; 1.

16 BBC News (25/09/12) Rise In Number Of Empty Shops Across Northern Ireland. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-19700759>.

17 *ibid.*; 1.

18 BBC News (25/07/13) NI Councils Receive Funds To Tackle Dereliction. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-23305875>.

19 *ibid.*; 1.

20 *ibid.*; 1

21 Kelling noted that 'at a community level disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence', broken windows, he argues, may be an indication of such a sequence of events.

to the economy of place in a practical way for the good of the community. The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS), has, for example, set out possible measures to address vacancy issues. They suggest a range of options for vacant premises, which they term 'Meanwhile Uses'<sup>22</sup>, to include 'pop-up shops', or using the building for 'charitable or socially beneficial purposes, run by community or voluntary groups'<sup>23</sup>. This would, in some instances, allow properties to be temporarily maintained, to have the presence of people and make a positive contribution to place.

Not only are commercial businesses and signage essential for the thriving economy and community morale on arterial routes, also, as signage illuminates at night and brings people to place by day, it plays a vital role in the safety of public places. Jacobs' (Jacobs, 1992: 36) anthropological interest in how the city is used by people observes how shops assist in creating safe neighbourhoods, drawing people to the pavements. Where there are people there are sets of eyes, aided at night by the illumination of signage, where there are eyes there is surveillance to discourage crime (Jacobs, 1992:42)<sup>24</sup>. The fake frontages, essentially exploded photographs, offer no such potential for commercial activity, nor do they illuminate at night, hence their contribution to the built environments on these, as well as commercial grounds is marginal.

## IMPACT AND INTERPRETATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC STAGING OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

To refer to fake shopfronts as an optical illusion is an insufficient description of how they may be perceived. The fronts are comprised of photographs, usually on paper, sometimes vinyl, applied to windows, doorways, or in some instances the whole of the building façade, to give the initial impression that the scene is actually one of a thriving business. In 2014, one derelict public house, on Belfast's Shore Road, beside a key motorway entrance/exit, had what could be described as a tent-like structure draped over the roof. This rooftop tarpaulin mimicked a thatched roof, while, at the same time, the front of the building received a fake façade and signage. The impression for someone unfamiliar with the area was likely, or intended to be, that the pub was still an active business (Fig. 4,5). The reimaging of the bar, 'to improve rundown buildings along the route of the Giro d'Italia cycle race'<sup>25</sup> was enabled by a grant from the Northern Ireland Environment Minister in order to 'tackle eyesore properties'<sup>26</sup>, in parts of North of Belfast. The window dressing on the bar, located in a severely socio-economically deprived part of the city, did nothing to improve the local economy, instead providing an example of how tourists and visitors are given priority over its citizens. Following bad weather and high winds, by late 2015, the tarpaulin of the imitation thatched roof had

22 Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (2013), Meanwhile to meaningful: Meanwhile uses for vacant historic buildings. <http://www.uahs.org.uk/cmsfiles/Meanwhile-to-Meaningful-Meanwhile-Uses-for-vacant-historic-buildings-UAHS-April-2013.pdf>. While the focus of the work of UAHS is on historic buildings, some of the solutions they offer could equally be applied to vacant buildings in the built environment of Belfast's arterial routes. A 'Meanwhile use' is a term used to describe the temporary use of vacant buildings or land for a socially-beneficial purpose until such a time that they can be brought back into commercial use again.

23 *ibid.*; 3.

24 Jacobs gives examples of sets of eyes and the importance of these for surveillance and how good lighting makes this more achievable as 'good lighting augments every pair of eyes, makes the eyes count for more because their range is greater'.

25 Council gets £53k to deal with eyesore properties. Newtownabbey Times, Jan, 31, 2014. <http://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/newtownabbey-news/council-gets-53k-to-deal-with-eyesore-properties-1-5842786>.

26 Council gets £53k to deal with eyesore properties. Newtownabbey Times, Jan, 31, 2014. <http://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/newtownabbey-news/council-gets-53k-to-deal-with-eyesore-properties-1-5842786>.



been un-tethered and disappeared, once again leaving the underlying structure exposed.



**Figure 4:** The Boundary Bar, Shore Road, Belfast, before cosmetic treatment

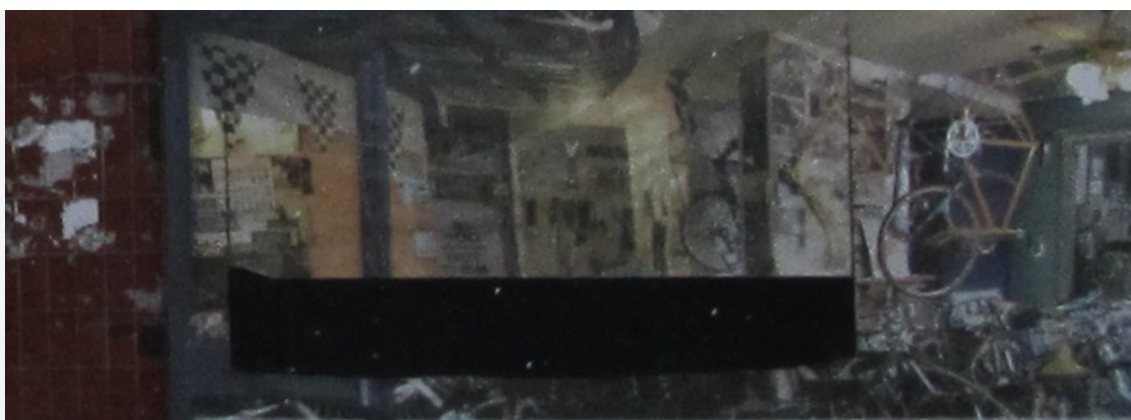


**Figure 5:** The Boundary Bar, Shore Road, Belfast, after cosmetic treatment

they can, it solely dictated by the lifespan and durability of materials, be only effective in the short-term. According to one retail analyst, 'the only way to make vacant premises better is to spend money encouraging would-be occupiers to set up businesses and get people coming through their doors spending money'<sup>27</sup>. This view is echoed by public opinion 'the shop fronts are cosmetic surgery for serious wounds'<sup>28</sup>. They are looking after the banks instead of saving good businesses' (Fig. 6,7).

27 Donald McFetridge, retail analyst, Ulster University, in, £8m spent on fake shop fronts in Northern Ireland, 18/04/14, Belfast Telegraph. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/in-pictures-8m-spent-on-fake-shop-fronts-in-northern-ireland-30196699.html>

28 Kevin Maguire, 62, an unemployed man from the town of Belcoo, speaking to Reuters, 'Fake shop fronts hide economic woes before G8'. (03/06/2013). <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-irish-g8-fakeshops-idUKBRE9520Z520130603>.



**Figure 6:** A section of a fake front showing how one of the pieces of poster is now missing



**Figure 7:** This fake front, erected since 2012, already has faded lettering and images.

only superficially related to their situation, being photographic representations of shopfronts from other places. Real shopfronts in a locale are often representative of the local economy, with goods catering to local societal needs and desires, according to socio-economic means. For example, an artisan bakery, or delicatessen on a street where other shops cater for basic needs and the local economy is struggling is not representative of nearby socio-economic trends. This results in imposed fake facades that are often not a true or accurate representation of local society and place, 'where would you see a shop front in Northern Ireland like this anyway? It's more like something you'd find in Belgravia or Chelsea'<sup>29</sup>. While the photograph is not a reality, it should be a 'perfect analgon' (Barthes and Health, 1977:17) of what is seen, observed in place rather than photographic images that are not in keeping with the local context.

The connotations suggest that the image, photograph of windows and goods, is real, but contrary to this no consumer transaction can take place. Another factor in how these fake fronts are interpreted may be adjustments to the photographic image. Often the image appears too dark for the time of day and the illumination from within, which would be apparent if it were a real shop, is absent.

29 Kevin Maguire, 62, an unemployed man from the town of Belcoo, speaking to Reuters, 'Fake shop fronts hide economic woes before G8'. (03/06/2013). <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-irish-g8-fakeshops-idUKBRE9520Z520130603>.

Objects seen within a photographic image are 'accepted introducers of ideas' (Barthes and Heath, 1977:22) but goods within these cannot be consumed, clothes cannot be worn, books cannot be read, food cannot be eaten, no commerce can take place and no benefit in terms of affordances of place is offered. The doorways are static representations of doorways, where another affordance of place may be to enter, to seek shelter from the rain, neither entrance nor shelter are possible. Where shops contribute to neighbourhood safety, offering a place where help may be sought, no help is possible from the static figures in the photographs, who are beyond animation or interaction with community members.

As the images are photographs taken elsewhere, more than just the unnatural lighting may signify that the image is an imposter to place. The shop photographed is unlikely to be identical in size or scale to the one on which the image is placed; therefore scale may be either too big or small, making it apparent that the scene is an imitation.

## THE FAKE SHOPFRONTS ON BELFAST'S NEWTOWNARDS ROAD

Historically the Newtownards Road, in East Belfast was a successful industry-based area, but since the decline in the shipyards and other traditional industries it has been in economic decline. The road has many sectarian murals and has outbreaks of violence due to the segregated nature of its communities. Initiatives undertaken in the 1960s to improve roads infrastructure, the motorway and ring roads have left this road cut off from the city centre and its thriving economy, adding to socio-economic deprivation and high unemployment. The concrete plinths supporting road overpasses have created large



**Figure 8:** Larger than life people stare down on the road from this window photograph





**Figure 9:** Books in the window are small in contrast to the larger books seen through the doorway

pieces of land that cannot be developed, creating a barrier between the road and rest of the city. Intervention on the Newtownards Road has been taking place since roughly 2010 (Fig. 10,11) to address significantly high vacancy and dereliction rates. On this street, more than any other in Belfast, where travellers to the city would often pass through, there has been significant intervention on signage and installation of fake shopfronts.

On the Newtownards Road a fake record shop advertises vinyl records in a place where this type of product would not be a popular choice within a community of limited socio-economic means, hence a business of this nature would be unlikely to thrive. The record shop seems to be an odd choice of business. Observations of surrounding businesses may make the viewer suspicious of the authenticity, even before other semiotic or material clues are detected. Beside the fake record store is a fake bookstore, with signage in an ornate font seen nowhere else on this street and at a large and imposing size and the background of the fascia is a muted yellow, seemingly out of place on a street where primary colours



**Figure 10:** Section of Newtownards Road Pictured 2012



**Figure 11:** The same section of Newtownards Road, Pictured in 2015, has received intervention

previously dominated. (Fig, 12,13)

Beside Jordan's Bakery a photograph of a fake bike shop has been placed over the adjacent shopfront since 2010. The curve of the letterforms mimics the original Jordans signage. The bakery itself has received new signage and although the ornate poster font has been replaced with an uppercase italic serif, neither the words nor colour palette have changed significantly. The image of place is hardly improved. (Fig, 14,15)

Similarly, on a corner site, where, in 2011, there was a vacant shop with no



**Figure 12:** Fake book and record store, pictured 2015.



**Figure 13:** The same shops, pictured 2011, before intervention.



signage, is a fake front advertising as a tobacco shop, in cream uppercase slab-serif letters on a black metal fascia board. The strength of colours on the fascia board are in marked contrast with what appears to now be a faded photograph below, which seems to indicate that the shop sells magazines, cards, batteries,



**Figure 14:** Jordans bakery, pictured in 2011, with the adjacent shopfronts painted black



**Figure 15:** The bakery pictured in 2015, with a fake bike shop beside it



not confectionery or tobacco. (Fig, 16,17)

Another previously vacant shop has become transformed into a gentleman's outfitters, with at least the stock in the photographic image matching the denotation of the signage above. The ornate serif lettering, in black, seems unnecessarily condensed on a muted green fascia board at odds with the strong



**Figure 16:** The vacant corner shop, now the location of Fergusons Tobacco fake shopfront



**Figure 17:** Fake Fergusons confectionery and tobacco shop, with its now buckled metal fascia board

colour palette of surrounding signage – the previous colour was blue. The peeling paper on the upper storey of the building makes it apparent the signage is fake and now approaching disrepair and the image of the footballer does not help to convince that the shopfront is real. (Fig, 18,19)

## CONCLUSION



**Figure 18:**  
The previously vacant lot, which has now had cosmetic treatment



**Figure 19:**  
The fake men's outfitter, with peeling paper on the top floor and a footballer in the window

There are many visual cues to indicate, even without close inspection, that fake shop fronts are dishonest and abstracted realities set within the physicality of real shops on a street. Although designed to veneer the problem of vacancy and dereliction, their short-term existence does little to improve the appearance of place, especially when they start to show evidence of disrepair. Neither do these facades contribute to the economy of place, instead appeasing commuters and tourists in promoting a narrative that the fake built environment as an alternative reality is an improvement.

Created at a high cost the negative impact on society and physical infrastructure will



inevitably put further pressure on the development of communities and inhibit social interactivity.

The messages carried on these manufactured frontages are non-place-specific, generic and often unsuitable for the places in which they are superimposed. At a time when the high streets of built environments are under threat these faux frontages contribute, eventually, to the very problem they are trying to mask, fast becoming faded and in a state of disrepair. These fake frontages superimpose culturally neutral, non-place-specific messages in built environment of Belfast, where cultural belonging, history, ideology and myth are defining characteristics not just of the city, but of dominant hegemonic groups of place. Their messages are decided by civic committees, dictated by visuals from sign-makers, without an effective degree of community consultation. This amounts to a false rebranding of place and neutralisation of existing culture, favouring the needs and desires of tourists and visitors over that of the city's citizens.

These fake shopfronts are not a solution and constitute a new challenge to the very high streets they purport to help; they do not improve the socio-economic outlook of place or contribute to communities and replace existing semiotic codes with pre-fabricated universal codes in a bid to manufacture the image of place according to civic or corporate visions. While Belfast, like many cities, has streets and communities in need of investment and measures to counteract economic downturn and dereliction, these fake shopfronts pose a renewed threat to the culture and wellbeing of the very communities they profess to help. Instead, their main aim is a palatable reimagining of place for tourist and corporate interests within a wide, not local, economic agenda.

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# SHAPING THE STREETS AS COMMONS: ENGAGING THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS

**JOANNA SAAD-SULONEN,**

Aalto University Helsinki Finland and Aarhus University Denmark.

E: joanna.saad-sulonen@aalto.fi

**ANDREA BOTERO, SANNA MARTTILA**

Aalto University Helsinki Finland.

E: andrea.botero@aalto.fi, sanna.marttila@aalto.fi

## ABSTRACT

Public streets in Helsinki tend to be highly regulated by both explicit and implicit rules. There has been little experimentation by citizens in shaping possible uses for the streets apart from manifestations clearly intended to break the rules. However, the last few years have witnessed various bottom-up citizen driven activities proposing new uses for streets and new collective imaginaries around them (Hernberg, 2012.). The role of digital technologies, especially social media, seems to have been key for these initiatives to emerge and materialise (Horelli et al., 2015). We will examine three cases of self-organised citizen activities in Helsinki: two are about temporary uses of city streets through event-based activities; the third is an urban gardening initiative dealing with the permanent uses of public space with implications on the experience of the neighborhoods and streets. These initiatives exemplify the way Helsinki streets and public spaces are being conceptualized and transformed by its citizens. They also showcase the use of digital technologies for self-organisation. Their success, and the fact that they enliven urban neighborhoods and culture while offering a very local edge to the image of the city, has triggered new kinds of interactions between citizens and authorities, for example in collaborative attempts at bending existing rules. This brings forward aspects of the streets as shared commons (Ostrom, 1990) that can be collaboratively shaped, maintained and nurtured by several stakeholders. Based on interviews with key actors, we argue that shaping the streets as commons happens in a hybrid space, where the borders between the digital and physical dimensions of self-organisation are blurred. The questions we ask are the following: How do digital technologies - and what types - enable citizens to self-organise and engage with other actors? What are emerging hybrid "commoning" practices? What are the potentials and limitations of this phenomenon?

## KEYWORDS

Commons, Helsinki, Hybrid

# SHAPING THE STREETS AS COMMONS

## ENGAGING THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS

Joanna Saad-Sulonen (\*, \*\*, \*\*\*), Andrea Botero (\*, \*\*), Sanna Marttila (\*, \*\*)

\* Suo&Co research and design studio, \*\* Aalto University, \*\*\* Aarhus University -- firstname@suoet.co

### Abstract

Over the last few years, Helsinki has witnessed various bottom-up citizen driven activities, some of which propose new uses for public spaces and streets and new collective imaginaries around them. In this research we are examining three cases of self-organised citizen activities in Helsinki that exemplify ways streets and public space are being conceptualized and transformed by its citizens as shared commons. We will argue that shaping the streets as commons happen in a hybrid space, where the borders between the digital and physical dimensions of self-organisation are blurred. **Keywords: Commons, Helsinki, Hybrid**

### Introduction

Public streets in Helsinki tend to be highly regulated by both explicit and implicit rules. However, the last few years have witnessed various citizen driven activities (Berglund & Kohtala 2015) some of which are proposing new uses for public spaces and streets and new imaginaries that can be linked to what is referred as "commons". Commons are resources or resource systems that are shared and generated by a group of people (Ostrom 1990). They are also a relational quality, a way of being in interdependency (Bollier & Helfrich 2012). An important aspects of commons is that it presents an alternative means for the provisioning and governance of shared spaces, resources and services that go beyond the market or the state (Botero et al. 2012).

### Cases and methods

Our research is based on desk research, participant observations, collaborative work, as well as interviews of key actors active in three citizens initiatives in Helsinki. We ask how do digital technologies - and what types - enable citizens to self-organise and engage with other actors? What are emerging hybrid "commoning" practices?



**Case 1: Cleaning Day** is a celebration of recycling and reusing that takes place all over the city, twice a year. The day is organized by a core group of volunteers making it possible for citizens to set up second hand stalls and recycling spots in the streets of Helsinki.



**Case 2: Arabia Street Festival** is local street festival and activities in the Arabianranta neighborhood organized by the local residents association. The organization model of the festival is quite light and relies on self-organisation. (Photo by Riku Kettunen CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



**Case 3: Kallio-like urban gardening** is a self organized initiative in the Kallio neighborhood that cares for two urban box gardens located in public parks of the neighborhood. The gardens spots are endorsed by the city.

**Table 1: The different digital technologies and platforms used in each case**

Case	Digital tools	Purpose of use
Cleaning Day	Social Media Networking (Facebook Group)	Internal coordination and self organization of the core team. Documenting decisions
	Social Media Networking (Facebook Page and events)	Communication with citizens: What happens? When? Collecting feedback and ideas and negotiating rules
	Website / blog	General presentation, agreed upon rules, archive of resources
	Map mashup (Google maps)	Coordination (Good spots, crowded spots) and wayfinding. Documenting decisions
Arabia street festival	Wiki pages (PBworks)	Internal coordination and self organization of the core team. Archiving and Documenting decisions
	Neighborhood website	General presentation, agreed upon rules, archive of resources
	Social media channels: (Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr)	Communication with neighbours: What happens? When? Collecting feedback and ideas and negotiating rules
Kallio-like urban gardening initiative	Social Media Networking (Facebook Group)	Internal coordination and self organization of the core team. Documenting decisions
	Shared spreadsheet (Google doc)	Internal coordination and self organization of the core team

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### Results

Our cases show that streets are turned into potential shared commons (Ostrom, 1990) that can be collaboratively shaped, maintained and nurtured by several stakeholders. The role of digital technologies and social media in particular seems to have been key (Horelli et al., 2015, Poutanen et al 2016) in affording: 1) the possibility to build a critical mass and an initial spark, 2) support for distributed management 3) sharing and archiving of the knowledge accumulated, 4) possibility to combine sources of data, 5) the non-dependence on time or space (see Table 1). The citizen initiatives presented here engage in hybrid "commoning" practices that include the simultaneous managing of physical urban commons (e.g. the streets, urban public space, furniture) together with digital commons (e.g. their digital archives and documentations).

### Conclusions

Our research shows that shaping the streets as commons happens in a hybrid space, where the borders between the digital and physical dimensions of the self-organisation are blurred, and where both digital and physical commons are the object of management. Digital technologies are important catalyzers in the initial steps but as practices stabilize and more knowledge is accumulated, challenges start to appear.



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## RESPONSIVE URBAN EXPERIENCE: TOWARDS PHYSICAL LIVABILITY OF URBAN SPACES

**MAHA EL GEWELY and MOSTAFA ATWA**

German University in Cairo Egypt.

E: maha.elgewely@guc.edu.eg, mostafa.atwa@guc.edu.eg

### ABSTRACT

This poster is about design interactive installations in public spaces in a realm of re-imagining the urban space as a dynamic yet responsive entity that interacts with pedestrians. Giving the Urban space this sense of physical livability needs an integrated design process that merges physical and digital environments. As a fulfillment of requirements for an undergraduate course; CAD/CAM IV/ Responsive Prototyping track; taught in Faculty of Architecture at German University in Cairo (GUC) spring 2015, the students were required to design an interactive installation that responds to environmental context in near real time.

The poster presents two students' projects. 'IT'S ALIVE' project aims to transform a public place into a giant playground to initiate an opportunity for the people to talk to each other through a game and abandon their mobile screens. The Tetris blocks-alike-street furniture unpredictably stimulates people to play once a certain number of people are around.

The second project; the 'Refurbished JukeBox'; proposes an interrelated installation that connects different city areas with life game screening. A dancing wall is embedded in subway station, bus stops, sidewalks and other places in the city. This just gets activated accidentally once a person steps on a blended tile in the sidewalk and starts to answer questions on an interactive platform.

### KEYWORDS

Responsive Architecture, livability, interactive installations

# RESPONSIVE URBAN EXPERIENCE

## TOWARDS PHYSICAL LIVABILITY OF URBAN SPACES

Maha ElGawely , German University in Cairo  
maha.elgawely@guc.edu.eg  
Mostafa Atwa, German University in Cairo  
mostafa.atwa@guc.edu.eg

### ABSTRACT

This poster follows «Re-imagining City Street: The real and the virtual». It is about design interactive installations in public spaces in a realm of re-imagining the urban space as a responsive entity that interacts with users. Giving the Urban space this sense of physical livability needs an integrated design process that merges physical and digital environments. As a required fulfillment of CAD/CAM IV undergraduate course; taught in Faculty of Architecture at German University in Cairo (GUC) , the students were asked to design an interactive installation that responds to environmental context in near real time. The poster presents two end-result-projects. 'IT'S ALIVE' is a Tetris blocks-alike-street

furniture that aims to transform a public place into a giant Tetris playground as initiation for people to abandon their mobile screens. The project is an interactive 'Refurbished JuckBox' people to move, play and socialize. The game target is related to subtly change the seating platform arrangement to best fit the different city number of people present on the scene through a smart algorithmic life game system, in order to create the most effective social situation for people to interact more together.



Fig.01: Camera detects no. of people.

A camera detects the number of people present and if they are 3 or more, the game is initiated. "Tetris" block would be lighted and rotated in order to go a step closer to the pre- designed seating arrangement for the number of people standing in the platform at the moment. However, as the numbers of people increase the seating arrangement will be altered and enlarged more and more, through the game changing one block at a time. Gyro sensors to record the angle of rotation, colorful led lights, and small amplifiers connected to a small micro-controller inside each movable block.

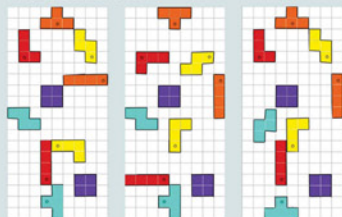


Fig.06: Possible Seating arrangements for groups of 3, 5- 7 and 10 people



Fig.02: A sound pops & bench lights up



Fig.03: People start playing



Fig.04: They Reached the Goal



Fig.05: Another bench lights up.

### INTRODUCTION

Urban spaces are nodes that interconnect the city fabric. These nodes are livable with mobility, activities and changing situations happening inside. As technology invades or lives, people are living in their screen bubbles. This makes a need for physical connectivity and livability of space

### METHODOLOGY

The course is about prototyping a physical responsive installation that could be applied on Urban scale with an open pedagogical platform of physical interaction. Students were introduced to a different design process that mainly bounces between physical modeling and digital media in order to design a near real-time responsive Urban Space

The platform life screens what's happening with another dancing wall in another area of the city , asks questions to the user then lets him choose a song . Eventually, the wall starts to visualizing the song through moving and tiles illumination according to the song's rhythm. The tiled platform contains a closed loop of interrelated sensors responding to human interaction.



Fig.08: Wall turned on

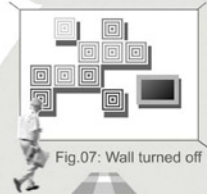


Fig.07: Wall turned off

The idea of the project comes out from the observation of the routine daily life of city residents. Therefore, the project aims to introduce a joyful spark in their daily paths to disturb this routine and interconnected nodes of connectivity in the city. A responsive tile blended to the sidewalk gets activated when the user steps. Responsively, a wall interacts and moves to a beat of a song.

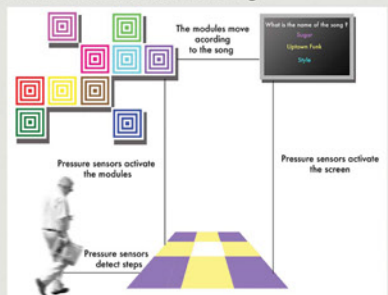
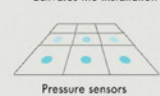


Fig.09: Installation components



The central tile activates the installation

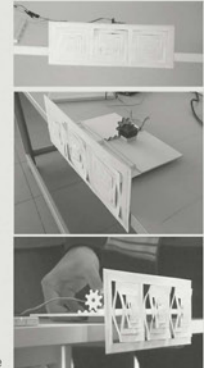


Pressure sensors



The front tiles are used to answer the questions

Fig.10, up: Interactive tiles  
Fig.11, right: Prototype



### Keywords:

Responsive Urbanism, livability, interactive installations

### Students:

The Juck Box  
Heba Magdi  
Daniel Adel

### It's Alive

Yara Galal

### Instructors:

Maha El Gewely Mostafa Atwa  
Mona Diab Shaimaa Fayed

Reem Hany  
Hussein Salim

Eman Farouk



# TRACK 3

## **T3** FORMAL AND IN-FORMAL STREET ART & DESIGN: INTERVENTIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Track chair | **Dr. FEDA SALAH**  
German Jordanian University  
Co-chair | **Dr. NADINE HINDI**  
FAAD, NDU

### **DESCRIPTION**

Streets constitute a major part of the urban tissue in cities concerning its physical existence, activities, and events. The transformative movement of the creative relationship of the individual and the physical city street in such public spaces will be the focus of this track addressing several key issues: - Interpreting and analyzing the energy and innovation found in city streets through the study of street art and design.

- Understanding and altering individual's perception of city streets as public spaces for events and refining them.

- Learning from the formal and informal relationships created between individuals and their physical city streets by studying different types of spaces, dwellings and territories that the streets have generated.

- Studying the effect of Individual Street morphological objects and images on individual perception and behavior and vice versa.

- Considering the city streets as extensions of functional settings and the extension of those streets into such settings.

- Researching the effect of legislations on the interaction and actions of individuals within city streets.

- Investigating city street's spectacles and their effect on the individual's behavior, interaction and acceptance.

Therefore, several disciplines can participate in this track namely: arts, graphic and signage design, product design, furniture design, architecture, landscape, urban design, street theatre, music and performing arts.

### **KEYWORDS**

Art, design, events, image, slums, street, territoriality.



# CALLIGRAPHY IN THE CITY – ANCIENT SCRIPT TO VISUAL IDENTITY OF HONG KONG

**MARIKO TAKAGI**

Hong Kong Baptist University. **E:** m.takagi@mikan.de

## ABSTRACT

Hong Kong is considered to be a prototype of a modern and vibrant city. Images of a vertical city, 24-hour illuminated, and a futuristic look not unlike science fiction films, are the typical visual representations. Yet, that stereotype, represents only a small aspect of the city. In fact, Hong Kong is much less polished, and is divided into several city districts with slightly different visual identities.

The first visual element the author noticed as unique: the lettering in calligraphic styles. Once detected, the author saw this everywhere. These calligraphic interpretations of Chinese words tend to be located in the lively, local, and slightly old-fashioned districts and appear in various sizes, colours, and from ancient calligraphic styles to typefaces mimicking traditional calligraphy.

In recent years, more and more Hong Kong graphic designers of the younger generations have been incorporating designs of traditional calligraphic shop signs into their work. They are applying them in graphic designs and creating typefaces. By doing so, they are positioning their designs as 'Made in Hong Kong' and at the same time they are strengthening the view that these typefaces and lettering styles are a crucial part of the cultural identity.

In this paper and presentation, follows a qualitative method by describing the main attributes of four calligraphic scripts. In a second step, three works by Hong Kong designer/artist will be introduced as case studies. All three cases show different approaches how designer/artists contribute with their work to communicate calligraphy as a part of Hong Kong visual identity. One question is: how do calligraphic styles affect the visual identity of this city?

## KEYWORDS

Visual culture, calligraphy and Chinese characters

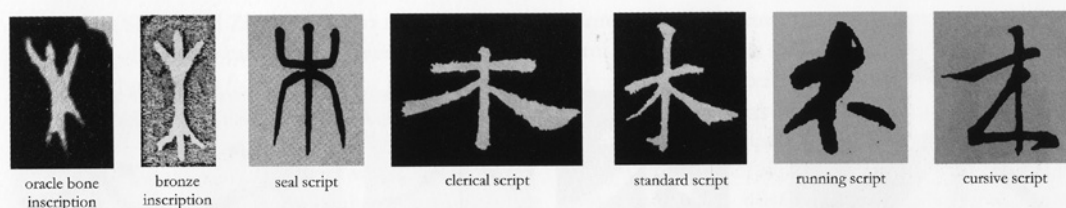


## INTRODUCTION

Chinese characters are considered the writing system with the longest uninterrupted history. The origins were drawings that only expressed meaning, without any association to phonetics, and were used to record events, and show natural objects and activities in which humans were involved. However, in the beginning, there was not yet any relationship with language, nor a spoken equivalent.

The evolution from drawing to writing involved several transformations: from outlines into strokes, pictographic visuals into symbols, and detailed representations into simplified interpretations. By the end of this gradual process, about 3,000 years ago, the characters had matured to become a relatively complete writing system capable to transcribe language into signs that could be pronounced. While the form of the characters has been abstracted, systematized and refined – from the first formation of almost pictographic shapes to a logographic system – calligraphic styles as the formal aesthetic representation of Chinese characters was always one part of the development.

In the following four categories of calligraphic styles will be introduced: Oracle, Seal, Clerical, and Regular<sup>1</sup>. (Fig. 1) These four styles are not only relevant in calligraphic practice and research, but also find their application by contemporary graphic designers in Hong Kong, forming a strong part of the visual and cultural identity of the cityscape.



**Figure 1:** The calligraphic evolution of the character 'tree' 木. (Ouyang 2008, 35)

## STYLES IN CALLIGRAPHY

### Oracle Script, Jiaguwen, 甲骨文

The Oracle Script is the earliest calligraphic style in which a single character is capable to unite form, phonetic and semantics, as a way to transcribe language. This characteristic defines the Oracle Script to be at the transition from drawing to writing and dates to the 14th century BC. However, Chinese characters originally did not derive from the motivation to record speech: instead, it was necessary for imperial ceremonies and a device for divination.

Characters were first written by a brush with black pigment on a turtle shell or the shoulder blade of an ox, and then subsequently engraved by a sharp tool. The style reflects the restraints of the material and the tool: the strokes are mono-linear and straight with rounded startings and endings. The Oracle Scripts is at the "border between the abstract and the concrete". (Ouyang 2008, 56)

<sup>1</sup> Not further mentioned are the Running Script and the Cursive Script that seldom find their way into an applied typographic interpretation. Both styles show the acceleration of the action of writing, through which strokes and characters start to link.



## Seal Script, Chuan-shu (wen)/Chou-wen, 篆書

Seal Script is a collective term for the Bronze Script (also pictorial inscription)<sup>2</sup>, the Great Seal Script, and the Small Seal Script. (Tseng 1998, xviii) The common point of the three scripts is the material for inscription: bronze. Bronze was the most precious metal in the Shang and Chou periods (from ca. 2000 to 200 BC), a symbol for authority and power. The scripts were engraved into bronze vessels that were used for religious and social functions. In the tradition of Chinese calligraphy, Great and Small Seal Scripts are the main styles used on seals (Khoo 2003, 19) and symbolise the advancement from the pictorial form to the abstract.

### Great Seal Script, Ta-chuan 大篆

The Great Seal Script derived from the Bronze Script (Pictorial Script) and the Oracle Script. Similar to the earlier scripts, characters of the Great Seal were found on ritual bronze objects from the 11th century BC onwards<sup>3</sup>. However, the style of the script advanced visibly. Not only did the characters become more simplified and less pictorial (abstract), but the shape and structure more regulated and aligned, and the strokes more mono-linear and with more rounded startings and endings. The characters are in a vertical format and some are symmetrical at the vertical axis. There are no hard edges or corners as the change of direction of a stroke (e.g. from a horizontal to vertical) is rounded. This gives the style an overall rounded and graphic appearance.

### Small Seal Script, Hsiao-chuan 小篆

The Small Seal Script is a continuation of the Great Seal Script and its advancement is seen mainly in the standardisation of the style. This was achieved through the visual appearance of the characters: the strokes even, thin and wiry; the outlines of the character further elongated; and within the setting of a text, spacing among words became more carefully adjusted. The focal point of a character was tendentially at the upper half of a character. By this time, the pictorial characteristics almost disappear. (Tseng 1998, 54)

These achievements were not due to a 'natural' evolution of a script, but rather the outcome of the first significant reformation of the Chinese writing system in history<sup>4</sup>. (Müller-Yokota 1994, 355) During the Qin Dynasty, Prince Qin Shihuang – who unified China and became the first emperor – placed an order to his prime minister Li Si (李斯, 221–206 BC) to design an official national script. (Khoo 2003, 14) Li Si modified 3,000 characters of the Great Seal Script by simplifying as well as justifying the strokes and shapes, lengthening the characters and modifying them to a script easier to write. He also extended the character set to meet the new needs of a unified and more complex state. Initially, the Small Seal Script was only for official purposes, gradually becoming the first nationwide unified writing style. (Khoo 2003, 16 and Tseng 1998, 52–54)

<sup>2</sup> The Bronze Script has a strong reference to drawings and is dated back to the 15th century BC, preceding even the Oracle Script. (Tseng 1998, xviii and 27) This style is seldom referred to, neither in the contemporary city scape of Hong Kong nor in the work by graphic designers and therefor will not be described in detail.

<sup>3</sup> Tseng gives the time period of 11th to 7th BC (Tseng 1998, xviii), while Khoo locates the script to the Zhou Dynasty, 1100–300 BC (Khoo 2003, 16).

<sup>4</sup> The second extensive reformation of the Chinese writing system was conducted in the 1950s to 1970s, in the context of the Cultural Revolution.

### **Clerical Script (also Chancery or Official), Li-shu 隸書**

The Clerical Script is also referred as “Chancery” or “Official” Script in English-language references. (Tseng 1998, 117)

The style of the Clerical Script is optimised towards an easier and faster writing, such the horizontal or vertical turning of the strokes, the transformation of some strokes into dots, and joining multiple strokes into one stroke.

During the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC – 25 AD), paper was invented in China and became widely used by the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD). (Han 2012, 38) The combined availability of brush, ink and paper influenced the aesthetics of the Clerical Script and led to its distinctive features: horizontal strokes that start in the shape of a “silkworm’s head”, then make a wave (bend) and finish in a “tail of a wild goose.”<sup>5</sup>(Ouyang 2008, 61) In general, the modulated strokes with their changes between thick and thin give a soft, yet resilient (robust) impression and reflect the brush movement. The strokes are no longer rounded and the downstrokes extend to both sides, rising upwards at their endings. Characters are mainly made by five strokes: dot, horizontal stroke, vertical stroke, downstroke to the left, and downstroke to the right. The characters are angular and oblate<sup>6</sup>. The development of the script is strongly related to the rising complexity of the State functions and the need to prepare records and conduct education. In this regard, the script lives out its name: Clerical. With better readability and a more efficient writing, it served as a practical documentary/secretarial script, and was written primarily by government officers and clerks.

### **Regular Script (Standard), Kai-shu 楷書**

The Regular Script<sup>7</sup> marks the final stage in the evolution of Chinese characters. (Han 2012, 44) It is presumed that the Regular Script had been established from the second to the third centuries, and in the early stage, the script was written on bamboo and wooden tablets.

The style of the script is much more controlled than the earlier forms. The strokes are shorter and the composition of each character is clearly organised. The stroke behaviour, elements and proportions of the characters are unified. Through this style the ‘hook’ stroke had been introduced. (Han 2012, 42) The horizontal strokes are straight but show a rising tendency to the right. A swelling marks each end and angle<sup>8</sup> of a horizontal stroke. Generally speaking the characters are upright and the proportion (width to height) resemble a square. In comparison to the rather expressive Clerical Script, the Regular Script appears precise and prescribed. As the style offers limited space for aesthetic and personal interpretations, Ouyang describes its visual appearance with “careful” bowing to the “strict rules” (Ouyang 2008, 63). Together, these attributes meet the requirement of a style for daily and official functions. The Regular Script remains the most used type for standard printing in China today.

<sup>5</sup> Khoo compares the ending with the shape of a “swallow’s tail”. (Khoo 2003, 20)

<sup>6</sup> The Clerical Script is 80 % of the height of the Small Seal Script. (Khoo 2003, 20)

<sup>7</sup> Also referred to as “model, standard, or block letters” (Khoo 2003, 21).

<sup>8</sup> The position, where a horizontal stroke makes a sharp turn to continue as a vertical stroke.

## CALLIGRAPHY IN THE CITYSCAPE OF HONG KONG

In the traditional areas of Hong Kong – where families still run their shops – handcrafted shop-signboards and neon signs give the district a distinctive visual identity.

In the past, shops were mainly owned by families and the business was passed from one generation to the next. A shop sign was regarded as an important visual identification mark. For its creation, a calligrapher was asked to design the draft for the inscription on materials such as brass, iron or wood, or to be set in plaster, or more recently, printed on stainless steel, resin, and acrylic sheets. According to Keith Tam (Tam Chi Hang 譚智恒)<sup>9</sup> who has researched shop signs and neon signs, the most popular calligraphic style chosen for shop signs has been Beiwei Kai-shu (北魏真書, also Northern Wei). The Beiwei (北魏) style was first seen on stone carvings in the Northern and Southern Dynasty (南北朝), created in approximately 420 AD. Beiwei is a transitional style between the Clerical Script and the Regular Script. The strong and bold strokes, with sharp and exaggerated beginnings, endings and turns, are its typical attributes. “The script is both serious and lively, practical yet has just enough personality.” (Tam 2014)

Tam describes the Bei Wei style as “a unique vernacular visual language of Hong Kong”. (Tam 2014) It was through the work of Au Kin Kung (區建公 1887–1971), a Hong Kong based calligrapher who practiced and mastered the Beiwei style during his career as a sign writer, that the style became not only popular, but rose to become the collective style preferred among sign writers since the 1940s. The signs in Beiwei style were originally written with a large brush in the actual size and were optimised for reading from a great distance. Best in a large size, the style is eye-catching, distinctive and easy to recognise – perfect for advertising. (Fig. 2)



**Figure 2:** Shop sign in the Beiwei style on the Wan Chai Road in Hong Kong. (Tam, 2015)

### From Street to Computer: Calligraphy to Typography<sup>10</sup>

Adonian Chan (陳濬人, born 1986) and Chris Tsui Sau Yi (Tsui Sau Yi 徐壽懿, born 1984) founded their studio Trilingua in 2010 after graduating from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where they studied under Keith Tam. The name Trilingua says it all; Chan and Tsui explore the possibilities of the trilingual culture in language (Cantonese, Mandarin, and English) and in scripts (traditional Chinese characters, Simplified Chinese characters and Latin letters). On the website of the studio, the two young designers claim their “ambition of redefining Hong Kong visual culture” as a core value. (Trilingua 2016)

<sup>9</sup> Keith Tam is Programme Director of the MA Information Design, University of Reading.

<sup>10</sup> In the Western definition, calligraphy and typography are two strictly differentiated professions. Smeijers divides the making of letters into three categories: writing, lettering and typography. Calligraphy belongs to writing, as it is done in one flow, without any later corrections on the shape. Engraving and the creation of neon signs are in the group of lettering, which Smeijers compares to the action of drawing. The main tool for typography nowadays is the computer, this indicates the main characteristic of this category as being repetitive in an exact manner. (Smeijers 1996, 19–20)

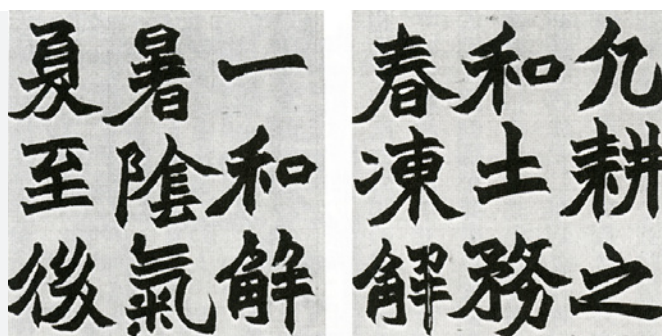
Presumably sensitised by their professor Tam and definitely inspired by the Sheung Wan neighbourhood, Chan and Tsui searched for a key visual to picture “Hong Kong design” and identified the old shop signs displayed in the Beiwei style. Since 2011, Chan and Tsui have been using the Beiwei style in various commercial lettering projects. Gradually, they saw the need to deepen their understanding of Beiwei, and Adonian Chan started to investigate through calligraphic practice and theory based research. On the level of design, the Beiwei project has also been developing; what started as a lettering project of single characters has advanced to their typeface design project Hong Kong Beiwei Kaishu (香港北魏真書). (Fig. 3) While the initial inspiration came from the iconic calligraphic shop signs in Hong Kong referencing to the famous calligrapher Au Kin Kung (區建公), Adonian Chan also researched historical references. He selected the style of Qing Dynasty calligrapher Zhou Zhi Qian (趙之謙 1829–1884) as the historical reference for his typeface design. (Fig. 4)

By designing the typeface, Chan reinterprets and redesigns a traditional calligraphy (which is the signature of one artist) into a new typeface. He will make it available for other designers to use. Chan sums it up by calling Hong Kong Beiwei Kaishu is “a typographic response to Hong Kong’s visual culture<sup>11</sup>.”

Chan and Tsui are applying their typeface in their commissioned work as well as in their art. (Fig. 5) In this way Chan and Tsui reintroduce the Beiwei style to the city scape as a typographic visual identity that almost works as a branding campaign for Hong Kong and its self awareness.



**Figure 3:**  
Typeface design of  
Hong Kong Beiwei  
Kaishu by Trilingua.  
(Trilingua, 2015)



**Figure 4:**  
An excerpt of a  
calligraphy by the Qing  
Dynasty calligrapher  
Zhou Zhi Qian (趙之謙  
1829–1884). (Ishikawa  
2007, 105)

<sup>11</sup> Interview between Adonian Chan and the author on 29.04.2015.



**Figure 5:** Application of the Hong Kong Beiwei Kaishu in a neon-light installation at detour 2015 at PMQ. (provided by Trilingua, 2016)

### Connecting the past and the present, Calligraphy and Photography

Born in 1964, Benny Au (Au Tak-Shing 區德誠) graduated from the School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in 1993. Only one year later, he set up his own design studio, Amazing Angle Design Consultants Limited. In addition to his graphic design projects, Benny Au curates exhibitions and holds seminars on design, photography and publication. In 2003, he opened the “Miniminigallery” within his studio and uses the space for exhibitions, talks, and workshops.

Au started to work on his Wordspotting series in 2011. He has the habit of taking pictures on a daily basis – on his commute to his office in the industrial area of Aberdeen, but also during his walks through the different districts of Hong Kong and while travelling. This habit became the source for a project in which he connects a Hong Kong momentum captured in photography with a Chinese word represented in traditional calligraphic style.

The Chinese title of this project,「看」字 can be seen as a counterpart and extension to the English title Wordspotting. The first character 看 means ‘seeing’ or ‘looking’ in Chinese and is pronounced as ‘kan’, while the second 字 means ‘word’ or ‘character’, with 看字 (Kanji) being a homophone to 漢字<sup>12</sup> (Kanji), the common notation for the word ‘Chinese character’ as the writing system. While the English title describes the approach of this work, the Chinese plays with the different layers of reading embedded in the logographic system: the semantics (pointing at the action of seeing, looking) and the phonetics (referencing to Kanji and the form of the character 看 which shows an alternative orthography of the word 漢字).

<sup>12</sup> Kanji is the widely spread Japanese pronunciation, while in the Chinese context it is ‘Hanzi’. The characters 漢字 are used in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan as it represents the traditional form of Hanzi. In China and Singapore the simplified characters are used.

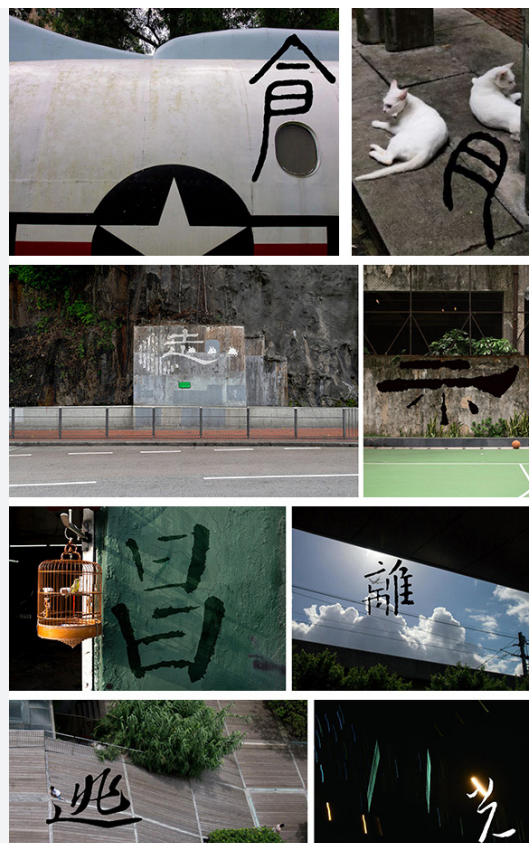


Au has build up a large photography archive, capturing cityscapes, objects and neighbourhoods. He says the idea of the synergy of image and word sometimes arises at the moment of taking the photo, and sometimes later, while looking into the archive. The characters are not merely added. Quite the contrary. At least one part of the character is replaced by an element on the photo.

Through the use of traditional calligraphic<sup>13</sup> interpretations of the words (instead of typesetting it with digital typefaces) Benny Au connects present and past. Traditional art becomes part of daily Hong Kong. The dynamism and the expressiveness of the calligraphy accords with the liveliness of the scene and the senses. Furthermore the Wordspotting series employs various calligraphic styles, reflecting the meaning of the words. (Fig. 6)

Wordspotting was shown in public for the first time at the exhibition of Typojanchi the International Typography Biennale in Seoul, in 2011. The theme of the biennale was “Fire Flower of East Asia”, featuring designers and artists from Korea, China and Japan. Recently a selection of the series Wordspotting is shown at the exhibition “Schriftbilder – Bilderschrift: Chinesisches Plakat- und Buchdesign heute” (wordimage – visual script: contemporary Chinese posters and book design) from 3. June to 31. July 2016 at the Museum Folkwang Essen in Germany. The exhibition is presenting designers from China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

Through the international exposure of Wordspotting, Au with his design becomes a representative of Hong Kong. The connectivity between a daily scene and the calligraphic representation of a word has been introduced to an international audience as a design practice developed and based in Hong Kong.



**Figure 6:** For “倉\_Cabin” and “背\_Back” Au applies the Seal Script (top left). In “背\_Back”, Au replaces the upper radical 北 of the character by two white cats lying back to back to each other (top right). The character 北 is classified as Rebus.

Its original meaning was ‘two people sitting back to back’ before being reassigned its current meaning ‘North’. By selecting the Seal Script for this visual, Au seems to stress the pictorial origins of 北 in the word 背 (back). The words “走\_Gone” and “禁\_forbid” are visualised by Clerical Script (2nd line). For “唱\_Singing” and “離\_Departure” Au uses the Regular Script. (3rd line) “逃\_Escape” and “光\_Light”, which represents dynamism, and motion, Au communicates the impermanence of the words by making use of the Cursive Script. (4th line) (Au 2016)

<sup>13</sup> Au does not write the characters by himself, but uses The Great Dictionary of Chinese Calligraphy (中國書法大字典), which is a comprehensive resource of characters written by calligraphers in the past. He scans and vectorises a character before implementing it into the photography. According to Au, the choice of the calligraphic style for each word is a significant consideration of the design process. (Au 2016)

### Calligraphy or Graffiti? The claim of the Kowloon King

Kowloon King, or King of Kowloon is the pseudonym of Tsang Tsou-choi (曾灶財 1921–2007), who is known for his prolific writing in public areas of Hong Kong, mainly on the Kowloon peninsula.

Tsang was born in Guangdong Province, China and came to Hong Kong at the age of 16. He made his living doing physical labor, on farms, in factories, collecting and recycling rubbish, among other jobs. At the age of 35, Tsang started to make his written traces across the city and continued doing so for the last five decades of his life.



**Figure 7.1:** Electrical utility box tagged by Kowloon King, photography by Lau Kin-wai (left). (Spalding 2013, 33) Tsang writing in the year 1992 at Sau Mau Ping. Photography by Lau Kin-wai. (Spalding 2013, 183)

The inspiration was a genealogical record of the Tsang family which led him to believe that generations ago, the British colonial authority of Hong Kong had stolen land from the family – land that is now Kowloon and the New Territories. Reclaiming the land by “tagging” (Hanru 2013, 118) the streets with his family tree became his mission. By writing in a calligraphic fashion, Tsang chose a traditional method to (re)claim ownership. (Hanru 2013, 119)

Tsang’s text had little variations. They always included names of his family members over several generations (including his own name, his wife and sometimes his children), as well as “emperor”, “Kowloon King”, “the Queen of England”, “Hong Kong government” and “New China”. All of the texts contained his signature “written by Tsang Tsou-choi”. (Fig. 7.1)

The city became his canvas. Nothing was exempt from his writing. Tsang covered them all: electrical utility boxes, lampposts, building corners, abandoned furniture, street signs,



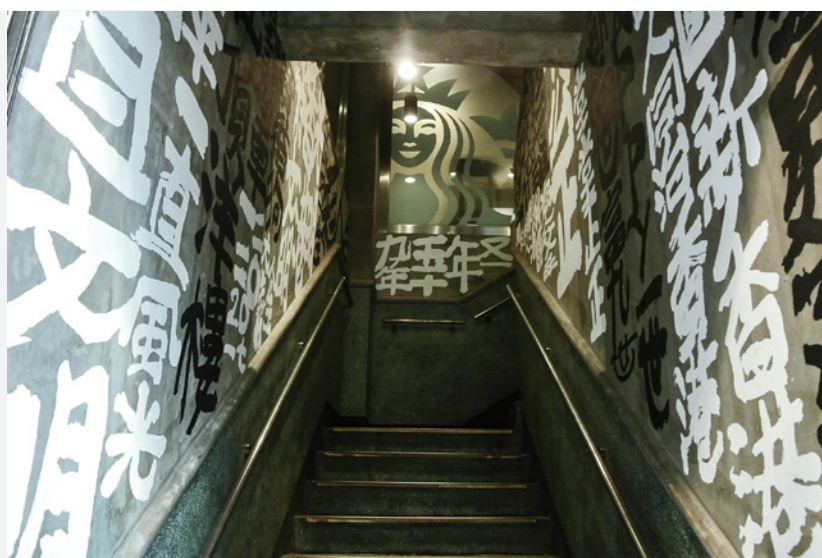
walls and more. At one point, his writing was present all across the city<sup>14</sup>. However, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Tsang were in constant competition: a newly written work might be painted over within the same day. Today, almost ten years after his death, not much Tsang's original works can be found in the city: what was not undone by the government department was ruined by the weather.

Regarding his calligraphic writing, Tsang was a self-made-man. In traditional Chinese culture, where calligraphy is regarded as a high, if not the highest expression of traditional art, the almost illiterate Tsang did not belong to any calligraphic school. The style of his writing can be best described as rough, strong, angular and honest. The almost mono-linear strokes do not show any decorative attributes. As Tsang did not receive any professional training and had only two years of schooling in his childhood, his style was seen as having a "primitive instinct". (Chung 2007, 76) The question arises whether it is legitimate to call it calligraphy. The curator Hans Ulrich Obrist uses the term "calligraphic graffiti" and "eccentric, graffiti-like calligraphy".

During Tsang's active period, Hong Kong residents regarded him as an oddity, a "madman", a "freak" or simply as "Uncle Choi" (Chung 2007, 98).

Simultaneously, Tsang and his unconventional writings, were seen as an ordinary part of daily Hong Kong life, as if belonging to the cityscape. In a sense, an outside perspective was needed to recognise and appreciate his genius. Hans Ulrich Obrist calls Tsang "a poet whose page was public space" (Obrist 2013, 4), and Hanru states: "He is probably the most unique and outstanding creative mind that Hong Kong has ever contributed to the world." (Hanru 2013, 121)

It might have been through the interest of the international art world<sup>15</sup> that made local brands and designers more aware of the commercial potential of Tsang's style. It is now part of the visual identity of Hong Kong. The downside is that local designers and brands tend to treat Tsang's style as common property and use it to decorate their design<sup>16</sup>. (Fig. 7.2) It seems that to use the iconic visual feature is enough to communicate the 'Made in Hong Kong' message.



**Figure 7.2:**  
Entrance of  
the Starbucks  
Coffee branch  
at Sai Yee  
Street in Mong  
Kok (Photo by  
Sze Wing Tam,  
Tiffany 2016)

<sup>14</sup> Joel Chung estimates the total pieces of writing during Tsang's productive period to be 55,000. (Chung 2007, 76)

<sup>15</sup> Tsang held his first solo exhibition, curated by the art critic Lau Kin Wai (劉霜陽), at Goethe Institute Hong Kong and Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wanchai in 1997. Hou Honru who curated one of ten exhibitions at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003 (15 June - 2 November 2003) included Tsang's work. In an auction in 2004 at Sotheby Tsang's work was sold for HK\$55,000 (USD\$7,050), since then his inheritance have been sold on auctions regularly. (Ho 2014)

<sup>16</sup> One example is the Starbucks Coffee branch at Sai Yee Street in Mong Kok. The coffee shop cooperated with the local lifestyle brand G.O.D. and Stanley Wong (alias Another Mountain Man). The staircase is covered by a text resembling the style of Tsang

## CONCLUSION

The three cases outlined above show different forms of interaction between a creative mind, the city streets of Hong Kong, and calligraphy (or writing in a broader sense). Calligraphic interpretations of Chinese characters are powerful visuals that in each of the cases are used to locate the work as 'Made in Hong Kong'.

The highly individual writing style of Tsang Tsou-choi, alias Kowloon King, has become a 'visual symbol of Hong Kong' through his tireless work around the urban areas, and through designers and brands using his visuals to create a 'Hong Kong branding'.

Benny Au's personal reading of the local cityscape creates a very non-stereotypical image of Hong Kong that connects past traditions with the present-day commonplace. His unique aesthetic links the calligraphic and photographic and visualises the vitality and versatility of Chinese characters.

By reviving the Beiwei style in a contemporary typeface and applying it to redesign cultural artefacts such as the Hong Kong Opera, Trilingua are transforming traditional elements of Hong Kong's visual culture for a local and international audience. They are particularly effective in reaching younger generations, enabling them to connect with and appreciate their visual culture.

All three cases discussed above are receiving acknowledgment by an international audience, and by this the image of a strong linkage between Hong Kong and calligraphy as part of its visual identity got strengthened across the borders.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Depending on the referencing author, the spelling/transcription of Chinese names (persons, regions and dynasties) vary, as well as the annual details. Therefore the reference will be named accordingly behind such information.

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## LUCI D'ARTISTA IN TURIN BETWEEN ART, COMMUNICATION, PERCEPTION AND ENHANCEMENT

**ANNA MAROTTA, URSULA ZICH,  
ROSSANA NETTI, MARTINO PAVIGNANO**

Politecnico di Torino Italy.

**E:** [anna.marotta@polito.it](mailto:anna.marotta@polito.it), [ursula.zich@polito.it](mailto:ursula.zich@polito.it),  
[rossana.netti@polito.it](mailto:rossana.netti@polito.it), and [martino.pavignano@polito.it](mailto:martino.pavignano@polito.it)

### ABSTRACT

Luci d'Artista is a reality born in Turin in 1998 and recognised nationally and internationally as a brand of "public art". The exhibition, which has developed on the initiative of the Municipality to meet socio-economic needs (to bring again citizens to travel the roads on the occasion of Christmas festivities in order to promote commerce), quickly turned into an event of public art involving artists, citizens and cities in a relationship of mutual partnership. The enhancement of urban places offers a 'dynamic' and completely new dimension of the City of Turin to citizens.

We analyze this experience and similar initiatives undertaken at Italian and European level (Salerno, Eindhoven, Lyon, etc.), to test differences and/or similarities, identifying analytical and possibly project parameters, in a methodological and systematic vision. Among the comparative examples in the Italian context it is considered the experience of the City of Salerno, substantially different for strategic objectives, cultural choices, artistic approach and developed themes. The group's findings are aimed both toward critical considerations of perceptual/evaluative character and towards new project outcomes. Particular attention is given to the multicultural objective: to inform, learn, share and enhance, both the existing and the "baggage" of values inherent in different cultures, with particular emphasis on aspects related to the multisensory project.

### KEYWORDS

Light, Perception/Communication, Enhancement, Public Art

## A “STRONG” ROOT OVER TIME: PUBLIC LIGHTING IN TURIN BETWEEN THE SEVENTEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES.

The first attempt to give shape to an organized system of illumination of the city of Turin dates back to 1675<sup>1</sup>. In this year it began to illuminate the streets by tallow lamps<sup>2</sup>, making Turin one of the first Italian (and European) cities equipped with lighting. The purpose was not only of public order but also to enhance the Court social events<sup>3</sup>. In 1782 Vittorio Amedeo III reorganized the city lighting system<sup>4</sup> [Fig.1a – deployment of lamps in the city 1814], but the year of change is 1826 with the creation of the first public lighting plan<sup>5</sup>. In 1846 there has been the introduction of the gaslights, innovative at that time. From 1879 we see the introduction of the use of electricity for public lighting<sup>6</sup>, which is resolved in 1884 with the permanent installation of incandescent lamps in Piazza Carlo Felice<sup>7</sup>. In 1914 [Fig.1c] it set the municipal project for the final transition to electric lighting, which was completed in 1924<sup>8</sup>. The 1914 project remained substantially unchanged until 1986, with the introduction of a new Illuminating Engineering Plan<sup>9</sup>. Between 1999 and 2000, it processed the Municipal Strategic Plan of Enlightenment<sup>10</sup>. Contextually it has been promoted as the Plan of Decorative Light of Turin<sup>11</sup>. This plan it identified sites and monuments as the subject of decorative lighting interventions.



**Fig.1:**

**a)** 1814, Map of the city of Turin where the squares are noted [...] as well as the site where the lamps are placed, ASCT, c. 64, f. 4, d. 1 (Stefanuzzi 2006, p. 6);

**b)** 2015, Hello Turin! (Ciao Torino!), night view from the ISS, Cpt. Samantha Cristoforetti, [www.lastampa.it](http://www.lastampa.it);

**c)** Division into lighting zones of the city territory until 1954, on the basis of the plan by the engineer Peri (Aghemo, Brogolino, Ronchetta 1994, p. 22).

1 In obedience to Royal Madam Giovanna Battista di Savoia-Nemours' wish. Penati 1972.

2 Castiglioni, Baldacci, Biondo 1991.

3 Ibidem.

4 Stefanuzzi 2006, p. 7.

5 Aghemo, Bistagnino, Ronchetta 1994.

6 Garbarono 1972.

7 AEM 1973.

8 Garbarono 1972.

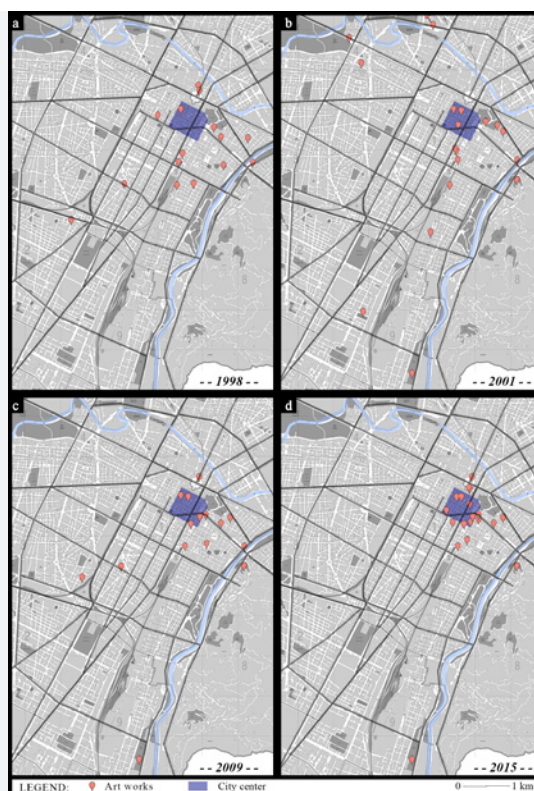
9 Stefanuzzi 2006, p. 64.

10 Assuming that artificial light is not just a technical tool, but also a key element in the presentation of the City (especially at night), Ibidem, p. 101.

11 Aguzzini et alii 1997.

Regarding this research theme, the use of lighting effects to animate parties and monuments is very ancient dating back to the invention of gunpowder for fireworks use<sup>12</sup>. In Turin, the first “public” use of light as a decorative tool was registered during the Italian General Exhibition of 1898 - when it organized an International Electricity Exhibition (in the light towers by Carlo Ceppi, the first photoelectric cells installed in Italy!)<sup>13</sup> - and, subsequently, with one in 1902 (with the technique “music of colored lights”, innovative at that time, by Raimondo D’Aronco in Car Pavilion).

Since 1998, when Turin welcomed a series of light installations designed by contemporary artists and named the event *Luci d’Artista*<sup>14</sup>, this project is constantly changing. In 1998 [Fig. 2a] the works on display were disseminated on the streets of the old town, touching districts such as Santa Rita (South), Borgo Dora (North), Gran Madre (East), Cenisia and San Paolo (West). In 2001 [Fig. 02b] the event was opened to the entire city, expanding its borders up to the park Pellerina (West), Italia ‘61 (South), beyond Po river to Monte dei Cappuccini (East) and beyond Parco Dora (North). In 2009 [Fig. 02c] we see the continuation of the way already settled in the previous years of a relative centripetal contraction in the positioning of the light works. Meanwhile we advise the maintenance of few “lights’ strongholds” in the western part of the City<sup>15</sup> [Fig. 02d]. Over the years some spots for the distribution of the works remain untouched, such as installations by Gilberto Zorio at Italia ‘61 and by Rebecca Horn at Monte dei Cappuccini (from 2001), with occasional “deviations”. There is a tendency to centralize the event toward the triangle of the historical squares of the city. While this policy is possibly intended to increase the tourist attraction of the event, on the other side it can only penalize the high artistic and cultural value of its development.



**Fig.2:** Luci d’artista in 1998, 2005, 2009 and 2015. Identification of the installations of the issues mentioned on cartography of the City of Turin. Not in scale.).

<sup>12</sup> In the Savoy circle we remember, for example, the great expressions of divertissement during major royal parties. Testore, Verri 1998, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/le-esposizioni-di-arte-e-industrie\\_%28Il-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Tecnica%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/le-esposizioni-di-arte-e-industrie_%28Il-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Tecnica%29/)

<sup>14</sup> Luci d’artista is a project of the City of Turin, realized by Teatro Regio di Torino and by IREN with the economic participation of IREN, Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione CRT and Chamber of Commerce of Turin (Camera di Commercio di Torino).

<sup>15</sup> This year’s edition is characterized by a further contraction in the area affected by the artistic phenomenon, marking a sharp change of trend compared to territorial development characteristic of the early years of the event.

## ANALYSIS OF THE LIGHT INSTALLATIONS IN TURIN, BETWEEN INTENTION AND INTERPRETATION.

With Luci d'Artista, in its eighteenth edition, the new Turin character is also that of a contemporary art museum in open air which involves and values citizenship, without spaces limited by an entrance fee<sup>16</sup> : it is a participatory form of art in which anyone can be protagonist, choosing his or her own point of view or own reading sequence, path, perception and interpretation, the way and time of use. Therefore, the city takes on new values and synergies that are created between the artists, the territory and its protagonists while the critical analysis of these relationships provide planning incentive crossing the context and therefore exportable as a model.

In the first edition, the municipalities, with the working group coordinated by P. G. Castagnoli and S. Jaretti, chose to involve 'only fourteen (artists), representatives of the different active schools and trends in the city'<sup>17</sup>. Each artist designed installations shaped on the specific city area, but able to be remodeled for subsequent repositioning. Over the years, the event has been enriched by new projects, with the rearrangement of lights already in the collection (not only in its original location but also in new sites), including the maintenance of works that have become permanent over the various editions and a temporary hospitality of other works in mutual exchange with other Italian/European events.

This is the case, for example, of the installation by Richi Ferrero<sup>18</sup>, Porto Palazzo:

'Symbol of the transformation taking place at Porta Palazzo, a Christmas Crane, hanging by its hook a boat that has caught five stars and a sea comet in its network. It is the metaphor of a neighborhood, home of one of the largest markets in Europe, a crossroads of cultures and ethnicities, giant Harbour of wares, introduced, exchanged, sold by Italians, Africans, Arabs, Chinese, South Americans, Russians. Aromas, smells, scents, colors, spices, poverty, anger, joy, death and hope. Music, rhythm, mixed voices in the air, prayer chants and cheers from the stalls of fruit and vegetables, in short, Porto Palazzo'<sup>19</sup>.

From Porto Palazzo [Fig.3c] to Imbarco Torino and finally Lucedotto [Fig.3d], the name has followed changes of location and meaning over time. While from the market aspect it has been placed on large sliding roads becoming highly visible at night. Therefore, the work has a multiplicity of lives, as well as a double day/night life, changing the element of completion directly related to the exhibiting "container" as well as Tappeto Volante by Daniel Buren [Fig.3e] (born as an orderly expanse of hanging cubes forming a theoretically level interpreted as a cover-up during the day and as a flying suspended carpet during the night), it has undergone a change in the choice of colors: from those of the French flag to those of the Italian one, for the Winter Olympics (even outplaced in Florence [Fig.3g]). It is of a different creative path instead Doppio Passaggio by Joseph Kosuth, who gave light and shape to the "bridge" metaphor choosing to set up, on

<sup>16</sup> Unlike the case of Eindhoven, for example, offering some installations/performances, with paid admission, in tents or theaters. [www.gloweindhoven.nl](http://www.gloweindhoven.nl).

<sup>17</sup> Alfieri Fiorenzo, Introduction in Testore, Verri 1998, p.8.

<sup>18</sup> For the authors' biographies refer to: [www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it/ita/media/files/luci-d-artista/biografie-e-schede-opere-luci-d-artista](http://www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it/ita/media/files/luci-d-artista/biografie-e-schede-opere-luci-d-artista).

<sup>19</sup> Testore, Verri 1998, p. 51.

Ponte Vittorio Emanuele I<sup>20</sup>, fragments by Italo Calvino<sup>21</sup> and Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>22</sup>, both deeply knew the city. Its rearrangement on any other bridge in the city would maintain the value of metaphor reducing the strength of the specific place, while in other cities it would completely lose the synergy between the writers and the urban environment. Thus, a project born in a characterized site, but as a transversal concept, extensible also thanks to a highly flexible layout mode with multicolored neon tubes<sup>23</sup>. As well, the installation Schegge di Luce by Mimmo Paladino is also deeply attached to the site, with a few strokes to underline the fundamental role of the factory - FIAT - as the city's motor; the installation looks so much contextualized that if it were relocated elsewhere it would completely lose its identity. Even Marco Gastini, describing his installation L'energia che si espande nel blu, [Fig.3f/h] states that:

'The choice of the place for my installation (Galleria Subalpina) was decisive for the idea: a unique space for sensitivity, a jewel of lightness combined with a pinch of austerity, in which the tensions that arise up in the ceiling between blue duly shaped LED tubes, the colored neon fast bouncing between themselves and the space created by the light spots as if creating my own space to act and at the same time a magnificent starry sky, attract and repel dynamically with an energy that the closed place of action contributes to foment'<sup>24</sup>.

The light reveals therefore its ability to define "open spaces in closed places" and "volumes defined in open space", as in the case of Cristallizzazione Sospesa by Carlo Bernardini [Fig.4f] that exploits the physicality of the light created by the fibre optics to create relationships between the transparency of the vacuum and the permanence of the background, as the structure of the new volume, "transforming the space from container for the work to an opened and permeable form"<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, there is the creation of a new spaces at the basis of the project Illuminate Benches by Jeppe Hein. Designed to challenge an existing space, the project ranks as participatory installation in front of Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo: the benches in the garden are lit in the interaction with the users transforming the normal perception of the place, a third space<sup>26</sup>, defined by the needs of the people who frequent it. Since the first editions the event has proved a fertile ground for experimentation and consequent implementation of multi-sensory installations as Cosmometrie by Mario Airò<sup>27</sup> or the special project Great Symphony (2015).

20 It connects Murazzi, to the hill, Piazza Vittorio to Gran Madre: places, spaces and buildings symbol of the many facets of the city of Turin.

21 CALVINO, I. (1974) *Invisible cities*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company. First Italian ed. Torino: Einaudi 1972.

22 F. NIETZSCHE, F. W. (1976) *Così parlò Zarathustra*. Milano: Adelphi. Translation by Mazzino Montinari.

23 Just as flexible and similarly crossed in contents (though originated from an attentive reading of the place making it an integral part thereof) is *Flag-bandiera dal mondo* by Enrico Tommaso De Paris, "light installation in Balon quarter, along Lungo Borgo Dora until Serming".

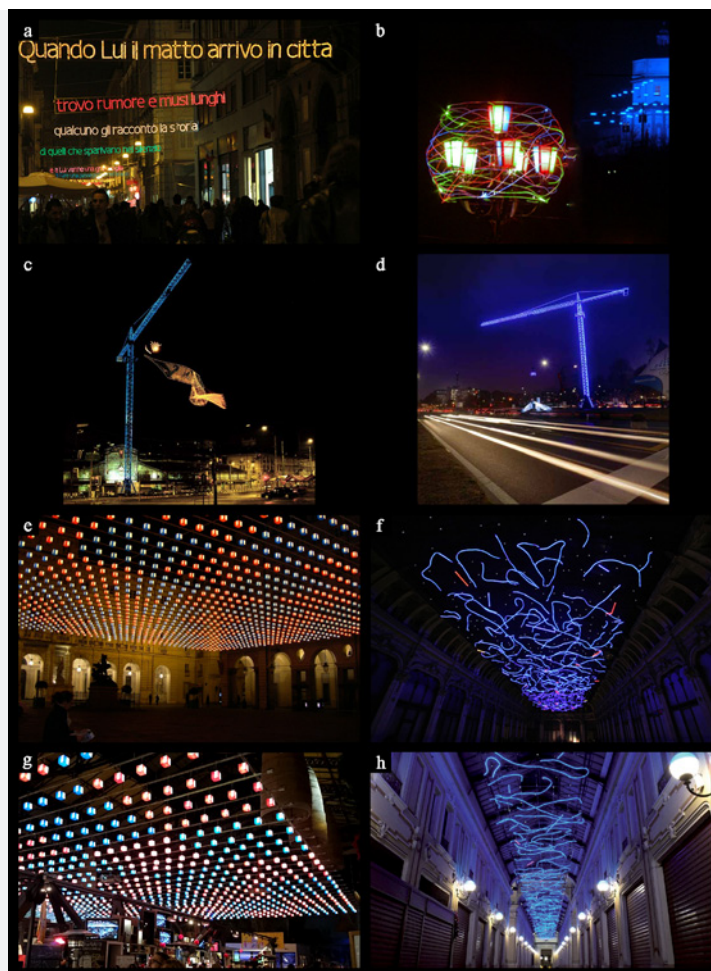
24 [www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it/ita/media/files/luci-d-artista/biografie-e-schede-opere-luci-d-artista](http://www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it/ita/media/files/luci-d-artista/biografie-e-schede-opere-luci-d-artista).

25 Ivi

26 See Marotta 2016.

27 Which involved the synaesthetic combination of bright vision and soundtrack. Precisely the choice of musical scores of the composer Riccardo Mazza from Turin is, in this case, the strong bond with the city. It is clear that, in this new contextualization this strong link has been maintained even though it was not always possible to set up the whole opera.





**Fig.3:** **a)** Lui e l'arte di andare nel bosco, Luigi Mainolfi ([www.spaziotorino.it](http://www.spaziotorino.it)); **b)** Regno dei Fiori: nido cosmico di tutte le anime, Nicola De Maria. On the background Piccoli spiriti blu, Rebecca Horn ([www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it](http://www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it)); **c)** Port Palace ([www.richiferrero.it](http://www.richiferrero.it)); **d)** Lucedotto 2005 Richi Ferrero ([www.lightnow.net](http://www.lightnow.net)); **e)** Tappeto Volante, Daniel Buren, Torino – piazza Palazzo di Città ([www.wikipedia.it](http://www.wikipedia.it)); **f)** L'energia che si espande nel blu, Marco Gastini, Torino – Galleria Subalpina ([www.comune.torino.it](http://www.comune.torino.it)); **g)** Tappeto Volante, Daniel Buren, Firenze – Mercato Centrale ([www.notizie.comuni-italiani.it](http://www.notizie.comuni-italiani.it)); **h)** L'energia che si espande nel blu, Marco Gastini, Torino - Galleria Umberto I ([www.lucenews.it](http://www.lucenews.it)).

## EXAMPLES FROM EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Among the many comparable festivals<sup>28</sup>, Glow in Eindhoven [Fig.4g]<sup>29</sup> shows the city in other roles: as a space for rhetoric, narrative, memory, dialogue and reflection; allowing artists to bring back the magic in the most hidden parts of the city. Every year there is a general theme that inspires the works, but the common goal is always to accompany visitors on a pleasant voyage of discovery of the city, to perceive the changes dictated by the new pace of life<sup>30</sup>. Of great interest the Berlin Festival of Lights with German and international artists and lighting designers<sup>31</sup>. This festival is accompanied by numerous cultural events, all exploring the theme of Light<sup>32</sup>. The combination of live experience with the classical and social media makes the event a unique communication and a

28 Among the many, for their experimental and innovative nature, we mention: Amsterdam Light Festival, Signal Festival in Prague, Valon Voimat in Helsinki, LichtRouten in Lüdenscheid and especially the Lighting Guerrilla in Lubiana. For a broader overview, see [www.international-lightfestivals.org/](http://www.international-lightfestivals.org/) and [www.lightingnow.net/](http://www.lightingnow.net/)

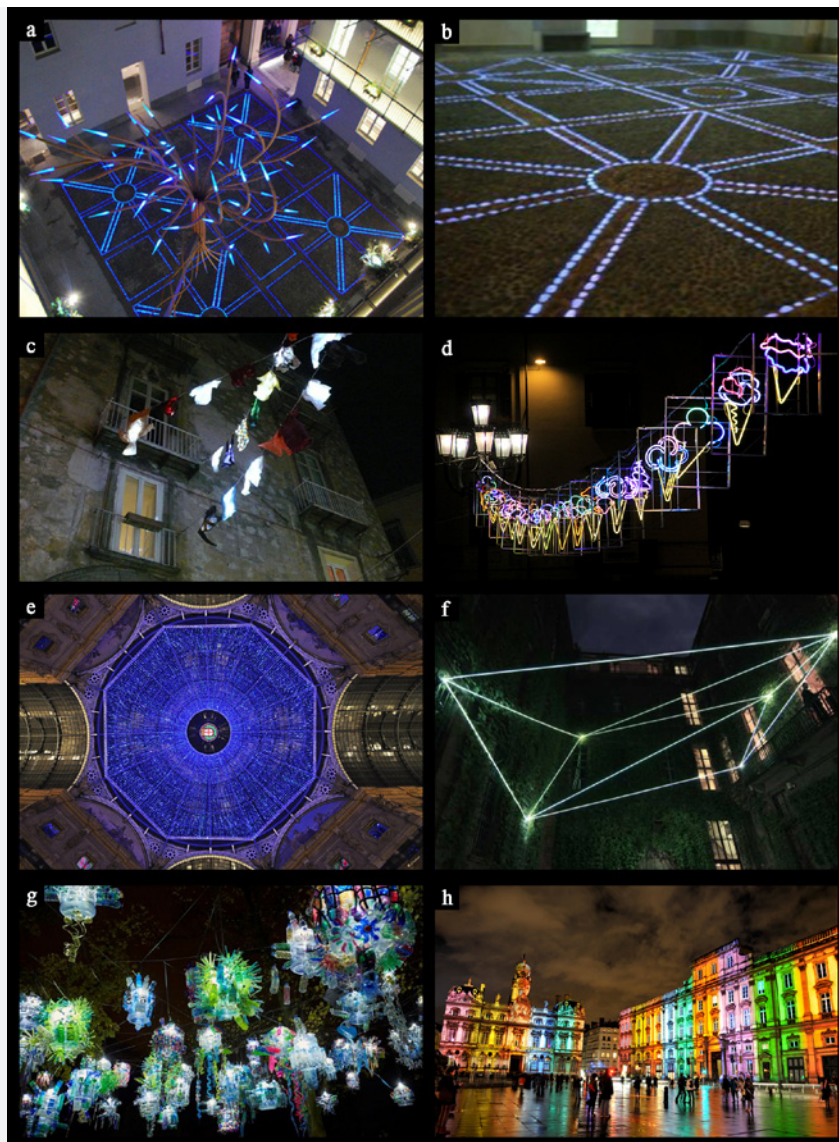
29 In its tenth edition this year, it is a truly international forum on the use of light in art and architecture, where designers and artists can compare their experiences about the fascinating effects of lighting of buildings and public spaces in the center of the city.

30 [www.blogolanda.it/2010/11/05/glow-eindhoven-il-festival-della-luce/](http://www.blogolanda.it/2010/11/05/glow-eindhoven-il-festival-della-luce/).

31 [www.festival-of-lights.de/en/](http://www.festival-of-lights.de/en/).

32 [www.luceonline.it/web/arte/festival-delle-luci-di-berlino/](http://www.luceonline.it/web/arte/festival-delle-luci-di-berlino/).

complete platform (online, offline, digital and direct). The Festival generates a huge media interest around the world and, as a final goal, does not forget to highlight the processes and the results obtained in relation to environmental sustainability. i light Marina Bay in Singapore<sup>33</sup> is also extremely attentive to the sustainability and combines the light installations with multidisciplinary performances like dance, music and flight demonstrations, where there is an added value given by aerial dynamic dimension. Through lighting effects, also in the Festival Arbres et Lumieres in Geneva the urban green is protagonist. The Fête des Lumières in Lyon [Fig.4h], which began as a religious event, today is an occasion to remember its history and its monuments<sup>34</sup>.



**Fig.4:** **a)** 2013 Giardino Verticale e Giardino Barocco, Richi Ferrero, Torino - Palazzo Valperga Galleani courtyard ([www.undo.it](http://www.undo.it)); **b)** 2013 Giardino Barocco, Richi Ferrero, Torino - Palazzo Valperga Galleani courtyard ([www.richiferrero.it](http://www.richiferrero.it)); **c)** 2010 Panni Stesi, Fabio Novembre, Napoli ([www.luxemozione.com](http://www.luxemozione.com)); **d)** Ice Cream Light, Vanessa Safavi, Torino - Piazza Bodoni ([www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it](http://www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it)); **e)** 2010 Un amore di Città, Swarovski, Milano - Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II ([www.comune.milano.it](http://www.comune.milano.it)); **f)** 2010 Cristallizzazione sospesa, Carlo Bernardini, Torino - Palazzo Bertalazzone courtyard ([www.starcantova.it](http://www.starcantova.it)); **g)** Glow Festival in Eindhoven ([www.gloweindhoven.nl](http://www.gloweindhoven.nl)); **h)** Fête des Lumières Lyon ([www.fetedeslumieres.lyon.fr](http://www.fetedeslumieres.lyon.fr)).

33 <http://www.ilightmarinabay.sg/> Among these, GoFlyKite.com Pte Ltd proudly presents a unique one-of-a-kind aerial light performance. Illuminating the night sky with LED-lighted kites flying in tandem to the music. <http://www.ilightmarinabay.sg/>

34 [www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/09/02/festival-luci-piu-belli-europa-classifica\\_guardian\\_n\\_5751258.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/09/02/festival-luci-piu-belli-europa-classifica_guardian_n_5751258.html).

In the Italian context, for Christmas 2008, Milan was covered with thousands of LED lamps on over 200 roads (about 85 km). The city's "direction" has focused on a unique and consistent style: Liberty, which characterizes most of the historical buildings of the city. The challenge has resulted in setting up a maxi project of lighting design which also involved the main monuments<sup>35</sup>, including the Vault of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele [Fig.4e]. In 2010 the second edition of the Festival, offers a real transformation of the city in an open-air stage light, including environmental sustainability, energy saving, creativity and innovation, «toward a new urban enlightenment»<sup>36</sup>. Another significant experience in Italy is represented by LuminAria in Naples, organized in 2008 in the scenic streets of Spaccanapoli, in the name of nostalgia of the old illuminations during folk festivals and the desire to borrow successful projects in vogue in other Italian cities. However, a parallel with Turin [Fig.4d] does not seem entirely appropriate: Naples looks more like an experiment to trigger actions of rebirth in a city, especially in a neighborhood that needs to "get out of the dark" and to renew. The innovative exhibition presents an ironic and experimental character, with clear references to the Neapolitan tradition, to the peculiarities and the many facets of the daily life of the popular neighborhoods of the city. Any artist has created a work in dialogue with the history of the place and the charm of the alleys: so the appearing of hanging clothes [Fig.4c], inverted umbrellas, light effects and projections on the walls of ancient buildings. Every year, since 2006, for a period of three months, the nights in Salerno<sup>37</sup> are illuminated by gigantic works of light art of Luci d'artista a Salerno. Scattered through the main streets and in the most attractive corners of the historical center, lights installations are designed by light companies and famous artists. The initiative of the municipality comes from the positive and fruitful cooperation with the city of Turin, where this evocative event began, and by now it has become a major tourist and commercial attraction. The event offers installations already acclaimed in Piedmont and new works commissioned directly by the City of Salerno. Unlike Turin, where every year various artists are invited to express, through an installation, their creativity and their perception of space to put the work in, in the last edition the city of Salerno has decided to propose some themes: "Myth", "Dream", "Time", "Christmas"<sup>38</sup>. The theme of the enchanted garden [Fig.5a/b], makes Villa Comunale di Salerno a fairy garden with bright tunnel and enchanted figures<sup>39</sup>.

35 The facade of Castello Sforzesco became a monumental spectacle of lights and sounds; Torre Branca is back to shine with ad hoc lighting project.

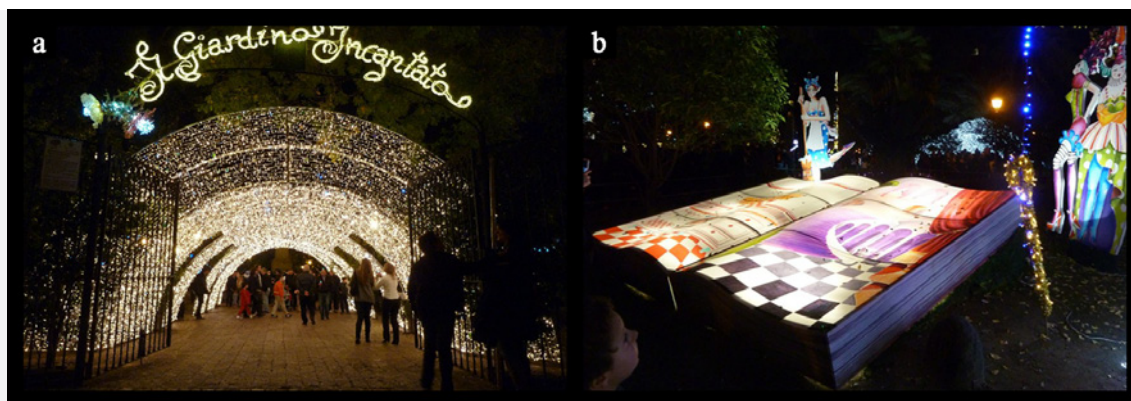
36 [www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/news/primopiano/archivio\\_2007-2011/arredo\\_urbano\\_verde/festival\\_led](http://www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/news/primopiano/archivio_2007-2011/arredo_urbano_verde/festival_led). An event that talks with the light of nature, water, green, dream and wonder, between fashion, design and creativity with the logic of a widespread event, accessible by the entire community. A festival that celebrates a sustainable human progress, with the symbolic lighting of a tower lit by solar panels and LEDs, "beacon of light for the future".

37 <http://www.comune.salerno.it/client/scheda.aspx?scheda=4972>.

38 «Through storytelling, the audience fell directly in the dreamlike atmosphere of the event, with stories to benefit directly from their smartphone: QRcode on the map or on event signage, you can access valuable information such as the narration of tales represented the lights or technical specifications sheets». [www.lucidartista.comune.salerno.it/static/luci\\_dartista2015/l\\_temi-5456.aspx](http://www.lucidartista.comune.salerno.it/static/luci_dartista2015/l_temi-5456.aspx).

39 [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luci\\_d%27artista](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luci_d%27artista).





**Fig.5:** Luci d'artista Salerno in 2014. **a)** Entrance to the Giardino incantato in Villa Comunale; **b)** Libro aperto con Cenerentola e le sorellastre; **c)** Fungo luminoso; **d)** La carrozza di Cerentola. ([www.lucidartista.salerno.it](http://www.lucidartista.salerno.it)).

## CONCLUSIONS

The International Organization Lightfestival is an open platform, a channel of comparison and international collaboration, directed to support and boost co-productions and exchanges among the most innovative European companies. In the local dimension, Turin has chosen to promote an open call to young artists; objective of this call: the search and selection «of the best public art project proposal for the creation of a “lighting project” to be installed in a street or a square of the City of Turin for the event Luci d’Artista<sup>40</sup>. Proposals were selected not only according to the aesthetics of the art project and the visual impact, but also according to the feasibility, the technical solutions, the originality and consistency with the following parameters: flexibility of set up; use of environmentally sustainable materials; use of light sources with low energy consumption; cost of maintenance. These parameters can be taken - in all dimensions, experiences and aspects referred above - as parameters for any meta-project in the most general sense. In an even broader sense, in the cultural territories now explored, we could add others to these, such as a greater attention to the urban and social context, but not only. Because these actions, going beyond the size of the “artistic and cultural game”: like a rainbow, ideally constitute a bridge between light, color and darkness, between heaven and earth, between the individual and his desire for poetry and imagination, but also between the individual and others like them, between history and future, between personal dimension and the one of a highest values of sharing between civilizations, because:

‘The greatness of man is to be a bridge and not a purpose: you can love in a man that he is a transition and a sunset. I love those who cannot live if they do not fade away, since they are a transition. I love men of great contempt, because they are also men of great reverence and arrows yearning in the other shore’<sup>41</sup>.

40 <http://www.contemporarytorinopiemonte.it/ita/News/Bando-nazionale-per-la-creazione-di-una-nuova-Luce-d-artista>.

41 These are Friedrich Nietzsche’s words chosen by Joseph Kosuth for his installation Doppio Passaggio in Turin. See note 22.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY AS A STRATEGY FOR AN URBAN PROJECT

**FERRUCCIO IZZO, MARIANNA ASCOLESE,  
ALBERTO CALDERONI, and VANNA CESTARELLO**

University of Naples "Federico II", DiARC, Italy.

**E:** ferruccio.izzo@unina.it, marianna.ascolese@unina.it, calderoni.alb@gmail.com,  
and vanna.cestarello@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The streets of Pozzuoli, a small city near Naples, still bear signs of the town's ancient road network. Such traces have already provided opportunities for scholars to reconstruct the city's history and could now become the basis for a contemporary design project. Pozzuoli's original form has been severely altered over time, resulting in today's fragmented urban form. Nonetheless, the city's historic road infrastructure could contribute to mending the shreds and tatters of its compromised structure by defining a new urban strategy for a public roadway anchored to five important archaeological sites. The goal of the project was to create a compelling pedestrian corridor that would be incisive in reshaping the city's atmosphere and character, connecting public spaces with archaeological sites, and guiding residents and visitors with clarity and logic. The result is a project in which the street represents the city's permanent and founding element.

Archaeology thus becomes a design strategy and not an end unto itself. Our most important reference was the Acropolis pathway system designed by Dimitri Pikionis in which the ground speaks the same language as the city's architecture. We strongly oppose Rem Koolhaas's assertion that "the street is dead" (Koolhaas, 1995) with our contention that "the street is still very much alive".

### KEYWORDS

Architecture of the street, identity, archaeology

## THE ORIGINS OF PUTEOLI AND ITS INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE SURROUNDING CAMPI FLEGREI LANDSCAPE

*"1st March 1787. How shall I describe a day like today? - a boat trip; some short drives in a carriage; walks on foot through the most astonishing landscape in the world; treacherous ground under a pure sky; ruins of unimaginable luxury, abominable and sad; seething waters; caves exhaling sulphur fumes; slag hills forbidding all living growth; barren and repulsive areas; but then, luxuriant vegetation, taking root wherever it can, soars up out of all the dead matter, encircles lakes and brooks, and extends its conquest even to the walls of an old crater by establishing there a forest of noble oaks." (Goethe, 1816).*



**Figure 1:** The archaeological sites of upper Puteoli

Like a tree's growth rings, Pozzuoli's topography reveals the city's history. In this particular case, the study of the ground plane and the variations in the surrounding slopes was literal. These elements hold more information than the written histories and narratives that recount the city's past.

Located to the northwest of Naples, Pozzuoli is a vast portion of the area denominated Campi Flegrei whose landscape has been shaped by millennial volcanic and bradyseism activity. In large part, the city's great fortune has been due to its topography. Originally named Puteoli, Pozzuoli became Rome's most important port in southern Italy: the empire's main geopolitical stronghold in the Mediterranean and fulcrum for trade with the East. Maritime activities of the Roman Empire in Campania were firmly linked to the Flegrei area, first in Cuma and then with the military occupation of the future city of Puteoli founded by the Romans in 94 AD. Its origins, however, have been attributed to a group of dissident Samian aristocrats who fled their native lands to settle in Magna Graecia to found the Dicaearchia settlement in the late sixth century BC. It is presumed that the town was born on the slopes of the promontory, where the Rione Terra neighborhood now stands. The settlement remained closely tied to the nearby Cuma government until the Romans discovered its strategic importance and began a process of colonization which subsequently led to the foundation of Puteoli. The small pre-Roman fishing village was thus replaced with a large port city which, after having been deemed a Roman colony, initiated many important public works in just a few years' time. Puteoli reached its maximum splendor between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. Most of the

city's grandiose monuments (Figure 1) - like the Maggiore and Minore amphitheatres, the Temple of Neptune and Diana, the Collegia of Tibicines - date from this period. The construction of these important works would not have been possible without the settlement's surrounding territorial infrastructure. Spas, fountains, and amphitheatres sprung up along the route of the Serino aqueduct constructed at the beginning of the first century AD to provide water for ancient Neapolis. Three main roadways intersected in Pozzuoli, not far from the city's original core, the Rione Terra: Via Domitiana, connecting the town to Cumae and Liternum; via Consularis Campana or the road to Capua and then Rome; and Via Puteolis-Neapolim, leading to ancient Neapolis.

It was the aqueduct first, and these roads later, that made the construction of major public works possible. Puteoli's internal roads connecting the city's public spaces are the same ones that, outside the city gates, led to other large urban centers. In fact, the Via Consularis Campana, connecting Puteoli with Capua, was, for a long time, the only access from the bay of Naples and the Campania hinterland guaranteeing a secure land connection to Rome. This route, via publica par excellence, along which the remains of a widespread necropolis are still evident, swarmed with trade, the exchange of marine products and local craftspeople. Via Puteolis-Neapolim, the name that Johannosky gave the "road leading to Puteoli" (Ostrow, 1987) with numbers on the milestones still visible today as far away as Naples, branched off in two directions toward the city: per colles and per cryptam. Although not confirmed, it is likely that Via Puteolis-Neapolim was built on an even earlier route connecting Dicaearchia, a small Greek town, with Greek Neapolis in the fifth century BC. Via Domitiana was built by the Emperor Domitian and led to Rome without crossing the hinterland and Capua; it followed the coastline, passed through Volturnum, Liternum and Cumae, and finally connected to the ancient Via Appia, reducing travel times to the imperial capital. Settlements with housing and public and religious buildings were organized along these routes.

These roads entered the town of Puteoli intersecting near the two amphitheatres. Far from the original compact urban core, Rione Terra, which expanded within the promontory limits from the center of its capitolium according to a cardo-decumanus scheme, the built fabric of the Roman city was discontinuous and fragmented. The streets and monuments were the permanent elements around which new housing was built over the following centuries. The city grew seamlessly, occupying the promontory first, and expanding to the Pozzuoli plain until the present day. The ancient streets connected the city's public spaces - bordered by large or small buildings - that were used for events that attracted a public from the surrounding region. After the uncontrolled construction boom in the mid-twentieth century, these became the same places that the city treated as residual spaces within a series of incomprehensible archaeological artifacts.

## **THE ROLE OF THE STREET: FROM LOCUS TO VIRTUAL SPACE**

In recent years, the contrast between exterior and interior space seems to have reached an extreme and labile condition. The city's public space has lost its form and sense of urbanity. In the last century, the street was considered only in the abstract: a place for communications, for vehicular and traffic flows, overloaded with new functions, in some cases clashing with its physical and architectural role. The square and the street as collective and democratic places, for leisure and social life, are becoming other kinds of spaces: virtual and intangible, the results of the changed ways in which humans interact with and relate to space. Jan Gehl emphasizes that a place's physical properties directly influence concrete action, "The disintegration of living public space and the

gradual transformation of the street areas into an area that is no real interest to anyone is an important factor contributing to vandalism and crime in the streets," (Gehl, 1987). In many contexts, the main element in the urban fabric no longer manifests itself as a place with well-defined form but as something that no longer belongs to people and the city, but to crime and refusal. Lack of care and attention toward what belongs to the community along with the superficiality and incompetence of those who live in and govern the city are the main causes for this situation. "Landmarks are crumbled or are so sundered from their contexts in city life as to become irrelevant trivialities. City character is blurred until every place becomes more like every other place, all adding up to Noplace," (Jacobs, 1961).

The loss of physical contact with the real world and the tendency to resolve questions and problems through networks of increasingly intangible relationships are just two of the underlying causes for the change in the perception and use of places. Alexander writes, "Communities are fragmented; people are uncomfortable in the streets, afraid with one other; not many people play the right kind of music; people are embarrassed. [...] But we detect a change in mood." (Alexander, 1977)

In today's cities, public actions appear devoid of civic sense. The ritual of the street is diminishing and with it, its authenticity. Contemporary society searches elsewhere for public space, as Françoise Choay asserts, "Whether we call it post-urban or by any other name, today's society, global and fragmented, electronic and media-driven, this urbanized society that has ceased to be urban and that has lost its urbanity, is seeking new public spaces that respond to new forms of social relations, still ill-defined, but no doubt less formal, less outward, less based on appearances," (Choay, 1982; translated from the Italian, translator's note).

## UNDERSTANDING POZZUOLI'S URBAN SPACES

An architect must first read urban space to be able to understand it. The ability to understand space requires a reciprocal relationship between the physical material and the people who together form and produce it. An architect must read space to learn to observe it and produce the images to communicate it.

Our proposed reading starts from physical and real data that help us investigate the myths, traditions, customs, and rules which are often concealed and become unwitting daily gestures. The past takes on crucial importance for knowing the city that was, is and will be. The street in Pozzuoli was explored in its dual role as public space and space of memory. "The urban street, from the origins of the first social agglomerations, was the main place for public contact and passage, a place for the exchange of ideas, goods and services, a place for play and struggle, for carnivals and funerals, protest and celebration," (Czarnowski, 1978; translated from the Italian, translator's note). Public space is a place for the community, a space of sharing, appropriation and transformation. The street is the void between the public and private realms where property lines appear increasingly tenuous and indefinable. It is a space for all and a space that all people need; not only as physical space, but also as inhabited social space.

The space of memory, on the other hand, is a container of recollections. Signs, traces and rituals give life to a space that narrates the city. "The street, defined in urban history as a life space, has a permanence that survives the city's concrete evolution and even its destruction. The street is characterized by a process of continuous change that is modified but remains within an unceasing process of transformation and reconstruction

in the physical and spatial senses,” (Czarnowski, 1978 translated from the Italian, translator’s note). The street, as a permanent fact, can transmit and transfer not only its formal essence but the action that unfolds along it, a sense of memory, transposable and legible in the present. History preserves and maintains the signs and traces of time that have built and transformed the city. Understanding these signs and the relationships they establish with the present is fundamental for recovering an identity-based relationship between people and city.

Pozzuoli has a dense and deep history. Signs, traces and fragments appear visible to eyes that know how to read and see beyond the tangible, in its land and on its ground. Streets and archaeological remains are the fixed elements upon which to construct an interpretation that precedes the architectural project. For the architect, in fact, confronting an archaeological site raises important questions about the architecture of all times. Ruins, says Marc Augé, “still give signs of life” (Augé, 2004), and suggest an occasion “against the end of architecture” (Gregotti, 2008) to again resonate with meaning and possibility. Archaeological remains are never silent but constitute active material for architecture, an endless reading for history and a foundational reference for rethinking urban space. “The sight of the ruins allow us to grasp the existence of a time that is not what the history books write about or that restoration try to bring to life. It is a pure time, not dated, absent from our world of images, simulacra and reconstructions, from this our violent world whose rubble no longer have the time to become ruins. A lost time that art sometimes manages to find,” (Augé, 2004).

The city’s ground plane, the street, became the object of investigation and research that begins from afar to reconnect lost history to time. The fragmentation of public space in Pozzuoli could be used as the basis for a possible strategy for a contemporary project and in particular for the design of public space. The street, a place of social interaction par excellence, is the founding principle for urban life and collective infrastructure. It is also the intermediary between the architectural project and archaeological space, a place of active dialogue for the entire community. “The street’s spaces, surfaces and objects have undergone modifications and re-modifications by users” (Czarnowski, 1978; translated from the Italian, translator’s note) and by catastrophic events in the Flegrei area that today bear witness to human activity over time. The observer has the delicate task of reading these signs and attributing correct meaning to them. The public buildings along the extension of Via Consularis Campana and Via Domitiana are like so many fragments scattered about within the city’s uncontrolled urban growth. Pozzuoli’s streets, however, still contain fragments of its ancient roadways, signs that have provided an opportunity for scholars to reconstruct its history. The results of such urban expansion led to the total modification of places that gradually lost their identity; it was not the city’s natural and necessary evolution and development but an indistinct collision of elements that did not take the founding signs and traces of ancient Puteoli into account. However, the permanence of these ancient signs gives the place strength and identity, linking contemporary complexity to the simplicity of an often concealed past.

## **AN ACTIVE REFERENCE. THE ACROPOLIS PATHWAY PROJECT: BETWEEN MEMORY AND PUBLIC SPACE**

Archaeological artifacts that emerge as scattered fragments and ancient stones that evoke the routes of the past require a project that can relate the present to Puteoli’s latent history and hold them together. This space between human action and memory takes the street as the physical fact upon which to act. The void thus becomes the solid



to be modified and transformed in order to fill gaps that time has brutally created. In this vision, the street is the element that can reconnect the fragmented city.

This was also the case in Athens' archaeological area where a path of stones was held together by earth. In a visceral and psychological work dating from the second half of the 1950s, the Greek architect Dimitri Pikionis was able to intervene appropriately and intelligently in an area near the Acropolis and Philopappou hill. Pikionis showed immense skill in rethinking a roadway in its entirety, conferring upon it the value and significance of public space in a place with unmatched historical and symbolic value. His project is the result of careful reading and interpretation resulting from dialogue between architect and place. The project is extremely interesting not only in terms of its formal expression, but especially in terms of the search for, and recognition of, a specific and clear design method. The architect sought to renew the meaning of a millenary place: the pathway became a tool for complex revitalization that could put into play things that exist and at the same time "revive lost relationships," (Ferlenga, 2014).

Pikionis' project is "[...] one of the best works of territorial restoration, an architectural project and above all a strong cultural manifesto of the contemporary world" (Ferlenga, 1999 ; translated from the Italian, translator's note): a project driven by the architect's obsessive dedication and desire to reconstruct his country's cultural identity and reactivate an excessively degraded landscape. Through the redesign of the ground plane, his intent was to restore a sense of place and recover disfigured memory, reconstructing public and collective meaning. The Pikionis project is one of melancholy and hope, born from place and from the architect's ability to grasp its delicate state and recognize the value of the past. Fragments were knit together and reactivated as a public urban space in which each design gesture manifests a deep-seated desire to work on a common good. History did not provide a romantic background for the project but was a necessary element of the present. Every trace was reinterpreted and reread before being minutely reintroduced into a unitary project made of stone, "Stone, you compose the lineaments of this landscape. You are the landscape. You are the Temple that is to crown the precipitous rocks of your own Acropolis," (Pikionis, 1955). Stones were re-assembled not to create a pattern but to evoke a sense of place. The ground creates an on-going relationship between movement and meditation, between action and thought.

The archaeological promenade was thus able to restore the spirit of Athens' culture, its foundation, and evoke the ancient city's social sphere. The pathways became an archaeological journey, or better, a journey into the past and at the same time into the full complexity of the present. Pikionis showed us how to design in a place that is a manifesto of community and sacredness as well as how to rebuild a roadway in which history is manifested in its crucial role that allows us to know the past and use it as a touchstone for the future. Marcel Poëte writes, "Cities tend to remain on their axes of development, maintaining the position of their original layout and growing according to the direction and meaning of their older artifact [...]. Sometimes these artifacts persist virtually unchanged, endowed with a continuous vitality; other times they exhaust themselves, and then only the permanence of their form, their physical sign, their locus remains. The most meaningful permanence are those provided by the street and the plan. The plan persists at different levels; it becomes differentiated in its attributes, often deformed, but in substance it is not displaced," (Poëte, 1929).

## NOTES ON THE DESIGN OF A STREET

Pozzuoli was considered a place for design research whose goal was to mitigate that “fatal separation” (Venezia, 2011) between archaeology and architecture theorized by Francesco Venezia. In fact, Venezia maintains that when ruins were considered to be a building material in one of the layers that make up our ancient towns, architecture could still be considered to be alive; but with the birth of archaeology as an autonomous discipline, ruins became “objects of a science that seeks to rebuild - through the remains of the past - the history and art of ancient times, upon which lies a series of reflections, reconstructions, interesting conjectures that are highly scientific, but absolutely barren in relation to life,” (Venezia, 2011; translated from the Italian, translator’s note).

And so it was the architectural project – by which it is possible to understand by doing, to know places by drawing, to appropriate the material of a city by interpreting atmospheres and characteristics – that allowed us to devise a strategy to define a new “infrastructure” that could regenerate the upper part of Pozzuoli starting from the new design of a specific portion of its street network. Design is here considered to be the architect’s means for telling stories and representing the knowledge acquired during the period of research that precedes the project itself.

In its present condition, Pozzuoli could be described as a place whose physical representation vacillates between the banal and the generic. Modern architecture has given way to a kind of hyper-functionalism that is the result of a clear lack of interest in the city’s formal composition. Pozzuoli might be considered a perfect example of what Koolhaas defines as the generic city, “The Generic City had a past, once. In its drive for prominence large sections of it somehow disappeared, first un lamented (the past apparently was surprisingly unsanitary, even dangerous) then without warning, relief turned into regret. Certain prophets [...] had always been warning that the past was necessary: a resource. Slowly, the destruction machine grinds to a halt; some random hovels on the laundered Euclidean plane are saved, restored to a splendour they never had.”

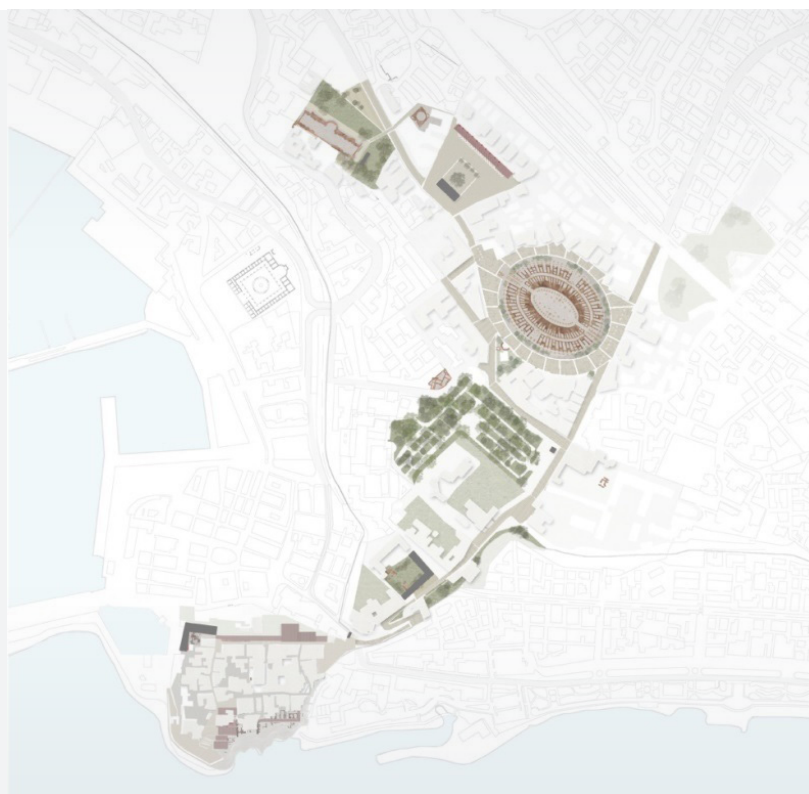
And again, “The exterior of the city is no longer a collective theatre where “it” happens; there’s no collective “it” left. The street has become residue, organizational device, mere segment of the continuous metropolitan plane where the remnants of the past face the equipments of the new in an uneasy standoff” (Koolhaas, 2001).

Urban memory is the intrinsic means by which any given civilization continues to build its city. Violent, tragic or heroic acts are celebrated in monuments - didactic and descriptive architectures - while the flow of life is converted into urban form. Archaeology (here we speak of archaeological sites with officially recognized, artistic and architectural value) - represented by structures that have lost their original function, and so become objects of pure matter and space - is thus an architecture with a dual meaning: monumental, insofar as it is evocative of a life that once was (therefore bearer of the civic identity necessary for social structure), and potential, as bearer of physical elements that strongly characterize the space that they contain (unique atmospheres, unrepeatable in other places in the world).

Pozzuoli (the upper part of the city, or that part of the city that developed around the major archaeological sites including the Flavian Amphitheatre, the Temple of Neptune, as far as the historic founding core of the city of Puteoli, Rione Terra) today appears to have been built in a way that was totally indifferent to classical urban logic. The tension between the built city and the archaeology of the past lies in the lack of a concept of public space around which to structure a city made of houses, an idea that was instead central to classical urban planning insofar as it coincided with a vision of human life: cives.

Public space thus became a space of absence. A sequence of “open” spaces grafted onto a jagged geography of archaeology (of different qualities and values) was an empty concatenation of urban spaces unable to host human life. It is sufficient to study a map to see that there were no places for social encounter or for the unfolding of civic life along the street connecting Largo delle Palazzine and Rione Terra. The impossibility of creating an urban project with a clear reference to a viable idea of city - with contemporary life at its heart - was the true obstacle to future-oriented development. In some cases, the memory of the past is a more of a limit than a potential in which citizen is automatically divested of his/her condition as cives. Civilization has been distorted by the absence of a vision for a practicable urban project while archaeology has been elevated to an abstract value to be preserved and protected. The contradiction thus became extreme: to preserve a dead past in view of a desired glorious future (or of a highly lucrative tourist business) without addressing the essence of a place - which is human life.

Yet we believed that archaeology might be the necessary link and an essential strategy for a unitary, clear and strongly coherent project (on the physical, social and anthropological levels). The slogan “preservation at all costs” was no longer an acceptable cultural position.



**Figure 2:**  
The public  
thoroughfare  
anchored on  
the archaeology  
of Puteoli

Our project is a public thoroughfare anchored on five urban elements (Figure 2): the temple of Neptune, the Flavian Amphitheater, Villa Avellino with its cisterns, the Collegia of Tibicines, Rione Terra. “If identifiable from near and far, while moving rapidly or slowly, by night or day, it (architecture, author’s note) becomes a stable anchor for the perception of the complex and shifting urban world,” (Lynch, 1960)

Minimal intervention was the chosen strategy that we believed could bring light and dignity to the city’s urban form. To counter the cries for Bigness and Non-places, the only choice was to recover an idea that had been lost when the city began to evolve and relinquish the real needs of human life in favour of maximum profit. Minimal intervention

(for which the implementation tool is the urban recovery plan) required the identification of “unnecessary” spaces, places for pausing and waiting, places dedicated to human life, spaces between things through which those very things can find dignity and expressive force without grandstanding or anachronistic monumentality.



**Figure 3:** The designed urban space around the Flavian Amphitheater

Today Pozzuoli’s archaeological heritage is scattered throughout the built context, devoid of any real quality. Through the creation of a strong public pedestrian route, the project sought to create a corridor that would be both incisive in the construction of the city’s atmosphere and character as well as effective in connecting archaeological sites with each other while at the same time orienting residents and visitors within the city clearly and logically.

Archaeology thus became a strategy and not an end unto itself. Like Pikionis’ Acropolis promenade, we believed that the ground must speak the same architectural language as the city. “In spite of its absence, history is the major preoccupation, even industry, of the Generic City. On the liberated grounds, around the restored hovels, still more hotels are constructed to receive additional tourists in direct proportion to the erasure of the past.... Instead of specific memories, the associations the Generic City mobilizes are generally memories, memories of memories: if not all memories at the same time, at least an abstract, token memory, a déjà vu that never ends, a generic memory.” (Koolhaas, 2001)

## LIGHT ACTIONS, DEEP CONTENT

We worked on a large space that could join - physically and ideally - the various archaeological sites (Figure 3). The use of a single material - concrete pavers obtained from the waste of on-site demolition - with chromatic variations that related visually to the surrounding built context, was a simple but necessary tactic. This material characterizes the new pedestrian corridor and becomes the unifying leitmotif among the important archaeological remains.

These became strategic means through which the design took possession of the place, exploited it and created references beyond the ground they sit on. So we were able to transform the different times, the various physical and material conditions, the symbols,

the memories and the atmospheres related to each archaeological remain into an architectural narrative conveying purpose and vitality to the street. Each ruin is engaged both as a thing in itself, an easily understandable object, and as a series of relationships that are gradually revealed.

Stasis is created on points where a particular condition of the city can be implemented or a view can be contrived to expose a specific value or character of the city and its landscape.

A dichotomy between form and perception is supported by the very interplay of stasis and motion with the intention of revealing and/or initiating meaning rather than imposing it.

And so we firmly oppose Koolhaas' admonition that "the city no longer exists" (Koolhaas, 2001) with the proclamation that "the city exists more than ever" thanks to the existence of ruins whose physical presence is a silent reminder that continuing to construct upon the existing built context (an identity-related practice of Western culture) is the only chance for the salvation of the city for the city (for people).

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**TRACK 4**

## **T4** STREET MOBILITY: CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS

Track chair | **Mr. MANFRED WACKER**

Stuttgart University

Co-chair | **Dr. DIMA JAWAD**

FE, NDU

### **DESCRIPTION**

This track focuses on one of the major tasks of roads - to connect. To ensure mobility while disturbing adjacent land uses not more than really necessary is one of the most fostering tasks in urban road design. Motorized vehicles in private transport, public transport, bicycles and pedestrians compete for the given road space. On the one hand traffic, pollution and urban expansion become pressing issues affecting everyday life, and on the other hand we find worldwide solutions which at least calm down these conflicts. There is a need to address the complexity of transportation in relation to the social dimension in cities, and consequently the role of streets. How has the given space to be divided for the different modes of transport? How can the conflicts between the different modes be solved? Will new technologies like autonomous driving or the shift to non-motorized transport be the main drivers to reshape the urban roads?

### **KEYWORDS**

Infrastructure, non-motorized mobility, transit, transport and land use, safety, energy and environment, technology, economics.



# THE 'MOVEMENT ECONOMY' OF AN URBAN CABLE-CAR. A STUDY OF THE VARYING IMPACT URBAN CABLE-CARS HAVE ON LOCAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, THE CASE OF MEDELLIN

**PAUL GOODSHIP**

University College London, UK. **E:** ucftpgg@live.ucl.ac.uk

## ABSTRACT

Throughout Latin America urban cable-cars are fast becoming a normal sight within urban transport systems, taking residents and tourists to and from previously isolated locations, providing a new form of accessibility that was previously not possible. These are seen in Medellin, Caracas, Rio and La Paz, with similar systems proposed for Lima, Quito and Bogota. Whilst their accessibility benefits are clear to see, it is the social benefits that are often the selling point, as they quickly become the focal point for transforming areas of extreme poverty. Yet, these are often viewed cynically as merely a political tool by local municipalities and governments to gain votes, without offering any real long-term socioeconomic benefit. As these new forms of transport become mainstream, there is a need to question their role in alleviating poverty and how best this can be understood. This paper explores this by investigating their role in transforming local commercial urban centres in Medellin's informal settlements, and how this links to its heavily talked about urban upgrading program - The Medellin Model. This is achieved using a Space Syntax type methodology to measure the spatial connectivity of the two existing cable-car lines, which are then overlaid with the commercial land-uses (both formal and informal) and the municipal interventions, gathered using onsite observations. This allows correlations between local commercial urban centres, municipal interventions and the connectivity of the spatial network to be investigated. This starts to suggest that where the cable-cars have enhanced the spatial networks instead of defining it, the commercial centre and informal commerce activities are more vibrant. This allows the paper to reflect on how cable-cars may relate to urban upgrading programs and the contributions they can have in alleviating the people's lives in urban poverty.

## KEYWORDS

Urban Cable-Car; Spatial Network; Commerce; Movement Economy

## INTRODUCTION

Medellin, the second largest city in Colombia with a population of around 2.5 million, has recently become one of the most talked about cities in the world, due to its rapid transformation from a violent, drug cartel controlled city to one that strives to be more socially inclusive. This transformation has been encapsulated through new forms of urbanism that engage the poor and a municipality that endeavours to integrate its citizens. When Sergio Fajardo was elected Mayor in 2004, one of his main goals was to create an 'equal city for all and where all citizens can construct relations stimulated by a city rich in services, culture and public space' (Brand and Davila 2013). This ambition developed into a new approach to implementing urban projects combining simultaneously physical transformations, social programs and participation. To do this the term 'Social Urbanism' was used, which was 'a metaphor for an integrated approach to transport and urban development, and for the power of the strategic potential of this integrated approach to address urban inequality' (Levy 2013). Yet, whilst it was only a metaphor, it helped to enable a large-scale urban upgrading project for the whole city, with a focus on the urban poor.

The most important project to develop from this was 'Proyecto Urbano Integral' (Integral Urban Project) or PUI. It was, and still is, an urban upgrading project created and administrated by the municipality with the aim of increasing the quality of life of inhabitants, focusing on areas where poverty and violence is most visible. Its strategy centres on an integral and comprehensive approach, providing each project with three main components – a physical, social and institutional component. This can be best observed in PUI Noriental (North-east), which oversaw the construction of large community facilities such as a Library-Park and Business Development Centre, 15 new or upgraded public spaces and streets, 3 new bridges offering connections between local neighbourhoods, new housing including the upgrading and consolidation of existing homes, a wide range of community meetings, workshops and events, a series of social and participatory programs (Calderon 2009). One of the essential elements to its success was the newly opened urban cable-car (Figure 1). This opened in 2004, making it the first cable-car system in the world to be an integral part of a city's transport system, by connecting previously isolated neighbourhoods to the existing metro-train system. The carriages float over people's homes situated on a steep valley face, preventing the need to demolish them and for long cumbersome journeys on a bus that has to navigate an awkward road network.



**Figure 1:** Barrio Santo Domingo with Cable-car line K, Medellín. Biblioteca España in the background (photo by author, 2015).



This quickly became more than just a simple transport connection, it enabled the upgrading projects to become a part of the citywide transformation process and opened up previously closed off neighbourhoods (and the realities within) to all citizens of Medellin. Intriguingly the cable-car was never conceived as a part of the overall upgrading process, nor was it implemented by Sergio Fajardo the mastermind of 'Social Urbanism'. It was instead instigated by Luis Perez, the previous mayor, and was initially intended to be a mechanism to transport workers in the north of the city to the factories in the south, via the heavily underused metro train (Brand 2013). Soon after it opened in 2004 it became clear to many that this could become the focal point for the PUI Noriental. As 'in the four years following its introduction, the city invested seven times the cost of the cable-car system in complementary urban projects', harnessing its potential to not only connect isolated parts of the city, but also comprehensively upgrade these neighbourhoods through physical interventions (Brand and Davila 2013). This saw major changes occurring in some of the most violent and poor neighbourhoods, and also brought much international acclaim.

This predictably led to a second cable-car line in 2007, connecting hillside settlements in the west of the city to the metro train. However, whilst the first line ended up being supported by complimentary urban projects, this was not the case with the second line, where a lack of investment in secondary projects meant there was an over reliance on its transportation value. Peter Brand, a local academic, points out "it should not be assumed that aerial cable-car systems [alone] will lead directly to the integration of poor neighbourhoods with the rest of the city" (Brand 2013b). This is clear when comparing Medellin's cable-car lines as 'what has happened around the K and J lines makes it abundantly clear that integrated, localised, parallel and coordinated strategies of intervention generate far greater benefits than the sum of independent, diffuse and sequential projects' (Brand 2013b). Yet, even with this realisation that cable-cars alone cannot automatically resolve problems of urban poverty, two new lines are currently being built in the east of the city and another further line is proposed in the northwest.

Whilst the cable-cars have helped to create an extensive transport system, especially in a city where the topology and urban fabric hinders traditional transport, minibuses are still the most popular form of transport. They account for 37% of all trips and walking is second at 25% (Sarmiento 2014).

This symbol of Medellin and its successful transformation is now being replicated in other cities across Latin America, including Caracas, Rio de Janeiro and La Paz, and is currently being proposed in Quito and Lima. Yet, whilst this novel form of transport creates a solution that prevents the need to demolish homes and local businesses, there are many uncertainties about its impact on the transformation of an informal settlement. This includes its limited ability to spatially and economically enhance areas of poverty. With this comes the question of how we measure the impact, especially in areas of informality where historic records and accurate accounts are often limited.

## THE MOVEMENT ECONOMY

In Medellin the cable-cars, and especially their stations, have quickly become the focal point of their neighbourhoods, which is easily observed by the numbers of people surrounding each station and connecting streets (Figure 2). They have introduced an important hub for social life to thrive.



**Figure 2:**  
The space in front of Santo Domingo Cable-car station, Medellín has become an important social hub for the neighbourhood (photo by author, 2015).

For small urban centres like this it is important to form these types of hubs, yet this challenge has often been beyond many planner. As Laura Vaughan states 'the challenge of the high street [and urban centres] is the need to provide both 'links in a movement system that connects places', and 'destinations of "places" in their own right'. She further mentions how the 'synergy of activities in and around suburban town centres has been shown to stem from the presence of overlapping movement flows, which in turn create the conditions for local diversity in land use' (Vaughan and Griffiths 2013). This argues that the urban areas that stimulate a variety of overlapping movement are best suited for forming hubs of social life.

This can be illustrated using of Space Syntax analysis, which has a long established connection to urban theory that can 'link physical aspects of the urban system with its functional, social and behavioural aspects, directly and seamlessly' (Karimi et al 2013). This is based on the assumption that when the Space Syntax measurements of 'choice' which approximates a measure of through-movement potential and 'integration' a measure of to-movement potential both have high values and overlap to the greatest degree this will create 'different modes of spatial co-presence and virtual community' (Seamon 2012). Therefore, spatially driven movement patterns are a key element in making local street segments attractive to social life and this usually results in a higher number of commercial land-uses. This is because shops tend to 'cluster in street segments where the spatial configuration has already allocated enough movement to support a profitable customer base' (Liebst 2015). Demonstrating the importance that urban centres do not only develop into spaces that people go to, but also have streets that people naturally move through. This then encourages commerce to locate in these locations, creating more resilience to an urban centre. Bill Hillier states 'every retailer knows that you should put the shop where people are going to be anyway, and it is no surprise if we find that the structure of the urban grid influences at least some land uses as it evolves' (Hillier 2007).

This can be described as the 'movement economy', which is 'built on the principle of natural movement, and proposed that evolving space organization in settlements first

generates movement patterns, which then influence land use choices, and these in turn generate multipliers effects on movement with further feed-backs on land use choices and the local grid as it adapts itself to more intensive development' (Hillier 2007).

These principles are also representative in informal settlements. Here the 'inhabitant of unplanned urban areas seek the spatial opportunities of the neighbourhood to generate any kind of income for surviving', positioning themselves in the best locations for pedestrian movement, which are the 'locally accessible streets connected to the metropolitan road network' or 'through' spaces. So like other urban centres, 'residents of informal areas have, to a certain extent, a local knowledge of their neighborhoods' thus they know where best to position their commercial activates. (Mohamed, Van Nes and Salheen 2015) This is easily seen with street vendors, as like shopkeepers they 'take advantage of public space, forgoing the security of fixed-site construction' by positioning themselves where the largest audience for their goods will be. This allows citizens of informal settlements to able 'to make a living where no jobs would otherwise be available' (Cross 1998) Hence, they judge where best to setup by their local knowledge of the streets and people.

This demonstrates the importance of the space network to commerce and it becomes apparent that the 'movement economy' is also prevalent in informal settlements. Therefore the ability to measure space in complex informal urban environments is especially important. This is something Space Syntax has established experience in (Hillier et al 2000, Greene 2003, Karimi et al 2007) and provides a method to allow local indicators, such as commerce, to be correlated to. Commerce is often free from the control of local authorities in cities like Medellin, especially the informal economy, and can readily reposition itself to take into account changes to the urban fabric. This provides an opportunity to examine how the reconfiguration of the spatial network via the introduction of a cable-car has impacted upon local commercial activities, providing a direct method for measuring change.

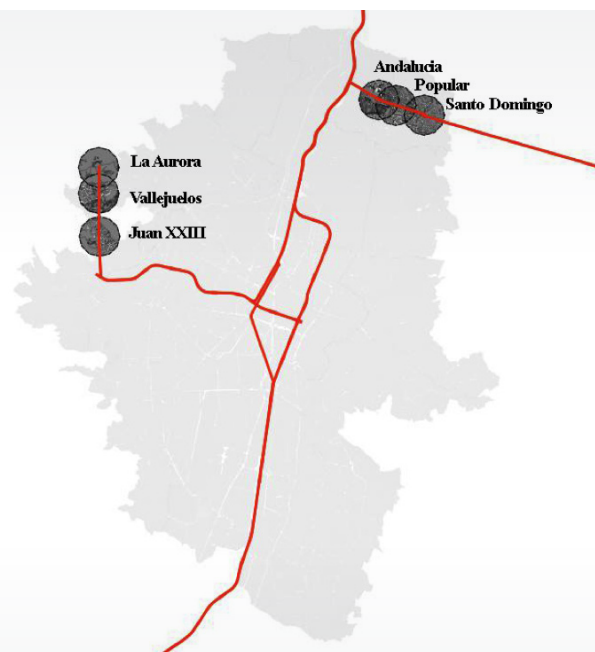
## THE OBJECTIVE

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to develop a greater understanding of the relationship between the improved spatial connectivity provided by an urban cable-car and local commercial activities. This provides the opportunity to explore the role of the 'movement economy' in this transformation process, which can help make informal settlements more resilient. This will examine how the reconfiguration of local urban centres enhance commercial activities and when connected to other wider-reaching interventions how this could further alleviate socio-economic conditions. Demonstrating that commerce directly reflects the spatial configuration of an urban centre and how the 'movement economy' is influenced by changes to this configuration.

To do this, the paper explores the relationship between space and commerce, through the case of the two current cable-cars lines in Medellin and their individual stations (Figure 3). This is discussed at two scales; a meso-scale, which is the area that surrounds both cable-car line and a local scale, which is the area that surrounds each cable-car stations (3 for each line), roughly a 500m radius from the station entrance. This allows different local conditions to compared and contrasted, providing potential correlations that may answer the objective and provides a method that does not rely upon unattainable historic data.

## DATA AND METHOD

To achieve this, an evidence-based methodology is used and is formed of two parts. Firstly spatial analysis, which examines the spatial impact of the cable-car and secondly, onsite observation, which records commercial activities in and around each cable-car stations.



**Figure 3:** The location of each case study and public transport (red line). Andalucía, Popular and Santo Domingo make up Linea K, the first cable-car and Juan XXIII, Vallejuelos and La Aurora make up Linea J, the second cable-car.

The spatial analysis uses a typical Space Syntax segment map to measure the spatial network of the whole metropolitan area. In order to understand the impact the model is developed twice, first with just streets ('without' the cable-cars) and second with the cable-car lines ('with'). The analysis focuses on two main measurements, Normalised Choice ('NACH') and Normalised Integration ('NAIN'). Normalised measurements allow different areas of the city to be compared. NACH measures 'through' spaces, typically the principal movement routes and NAIN measures 'to' spaces, typically urban centres. Along with the results being visualized, average correlation coefficient values will also be discussed, to explain how the spatial network has altered with the introduction of the cable-cars.

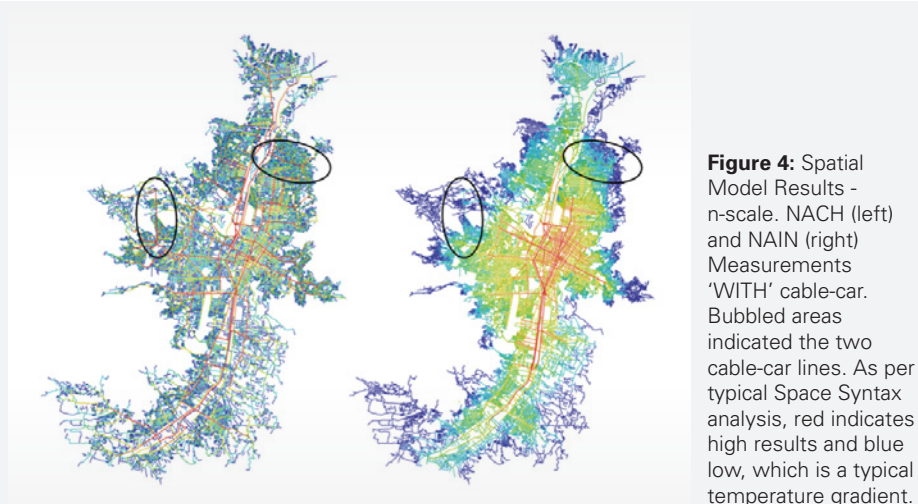
After this, onsite observations record in detail commercial land-uses for each case, along with municipal services and upgrading intervention. This survey is conducted within an area of roughly 500m radiuses from each station. The categories for this cover ever-possible commercial land-use and often mixed; these were predetermined during a pilot study. The observations also record the type of facilities for each land-use, such as a regular shop (regular), irregular shop (irregular) something that is not conventionally designed for commerce and street vendors. As with the types of commerce, these were predetermined during a pilot study. The survey explored in this paper was recorded between 5-6pm during a weekday, which is the busiest time of day.

This method allows both spatial and commercial data to be observed separately and then for the results of both to be cross-referenced to discuss correlations.

## RESULTS

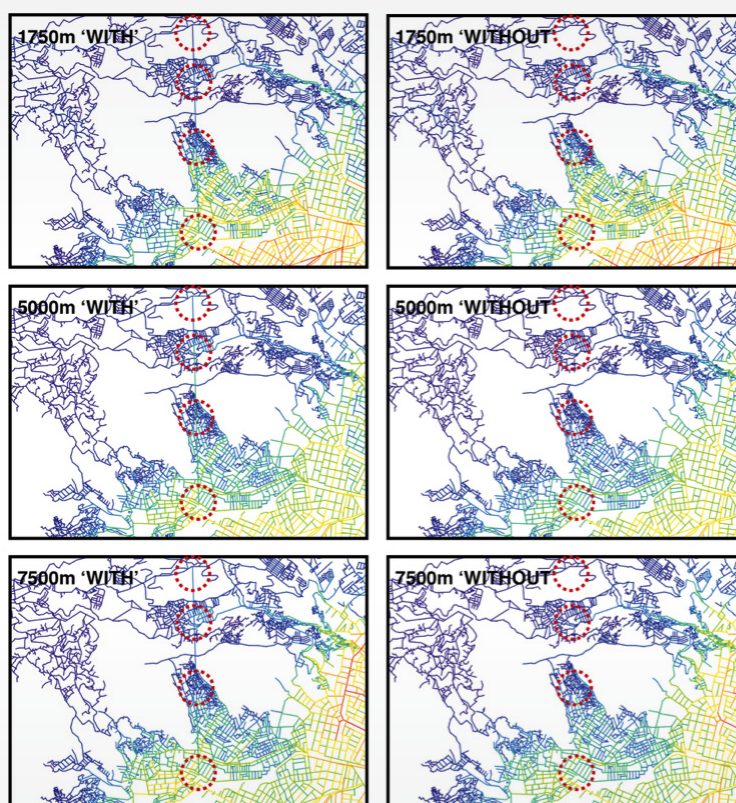
The spatial analysis investigated the impact of the cable-car by first looking at the NAIN results 'WITH' and 'WITHOUT' at a global scale (n), where the whole network is examined as one (Figure 4). Here, the area surrounding the first cable-car line is integrating better to the whole network, whereas the impact surrounding the second cable-car is less. When the same type of analysis is done with NACH there are no major differences visually (Figure 4).

These results are then examined more closely at analytical scales other than global scale (n), focusing on the area surrounding each cable-car line - the Meso Scale. The NAIN results for the first cable-car shows a large visual improvement, from 2000m upwards (this measures the space 2000m away from each line), incidentally the length of the cable-car line, the surrounding areas start to become more integrated, especially around the last station Santo Domingo. Whereas, with the second line very little improvement appears until a larger global analytical scale, of around 6000m (Figure 5 and 6). These visual results are confirmed in the average integration values where the improvements along the second line go from 0.49 to 0.59 and the first line goes from 0.63 to 0.71, showing that even with the increase being greater on the second line, the overall integration is still better on the first line, even without the cable-car line.

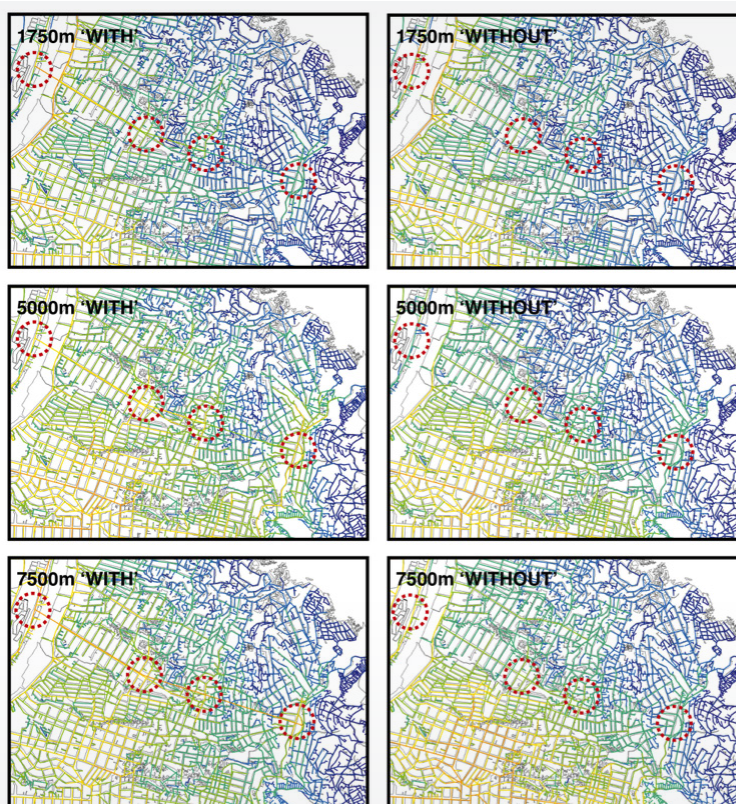


This pattern is continued when examining the individual stations, as the stations along the first line show greater improvements in integration, especially Santo Domingo where the integration values goes from 0.57 to 0.71. Yet, interestingly the station with the largest improvement is La Aurora on the second line going from 0.39 to 0.59. The other stations on the first line, Popular and Andalucia, also show high improvements going from 0.64 to 0.69 and 0.67 to 0.74 respectively, whereas the other stations on the second line, Vallejuelos and Juan XXIII show less go from 0.49 to 0.57 and 0.59 to 0.61 respectively.



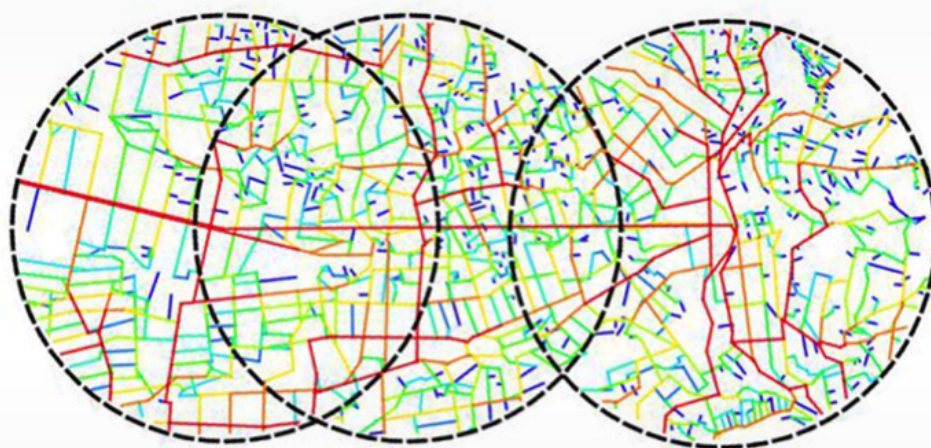


**Figure 5:** Comparisons between NAIN results 'WITH' and 'WITHOUT' at the second cable-car. Red-dashed bubbles indicates the stations.

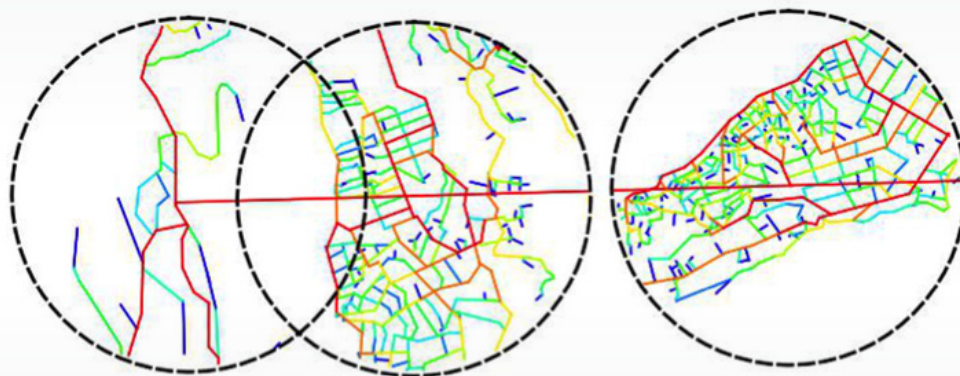


**Figure 6:** Comparisons between NAIN results 'WITH' and 'WITHOUT' at the first cable-car. Red-dashed bubbles indicate the stations.

When the results of NACH is analysed it is clear that whilst at a global scale there is very little change, at a local scale the improvements is greater, providing better 'through' space (Figure 7 and 8). When examined 'without' the cable-car the area surrounding the first line has better existing 'through' spaces than the second line, which conveniently passes perpendicular to each station. This is also true of La Aurora. With Vallejuelos there is no connection to any major 'through' space and Juan XXIII has the main 'through' space passing parallel to the cable-car.



**Figure 7:** NACH results for the first cable-car line of Medellin, showing the principle 'through' spaces in red, within a 1000m radius of each station. From left to right, Andalucía, Popular and Santo Domingo

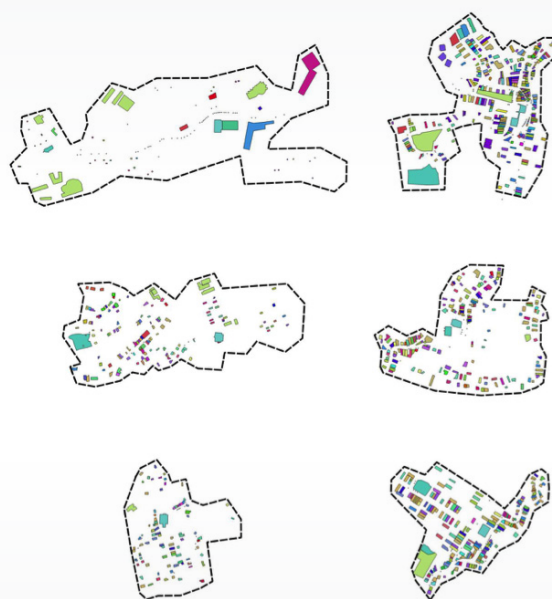


**Figure 8:** NACH results for the second cable-car line of Medellin, showing the principle 'through' spaces in red, within a 1000m radius of each station. From left to right, La Aurora, Vallejuelos and Juan XXIII

### Onsite Observations

When the commercial activities surrounding the stations are observed the first cable-car line has more combined commercial activities than the second, especially around Santo Domingo (Figure 9). Here the number of commercial units is 385 and whilst not as high, Andalucía and Popular also have high numbers at 200 and 236 respectively. This totals 821 for the first line. The commercial units surrounding the stations of the second line are significantly less, 102 for Juan XXIII, 149 for Vallejuelos and 105 for La Aurora, totaling 356.

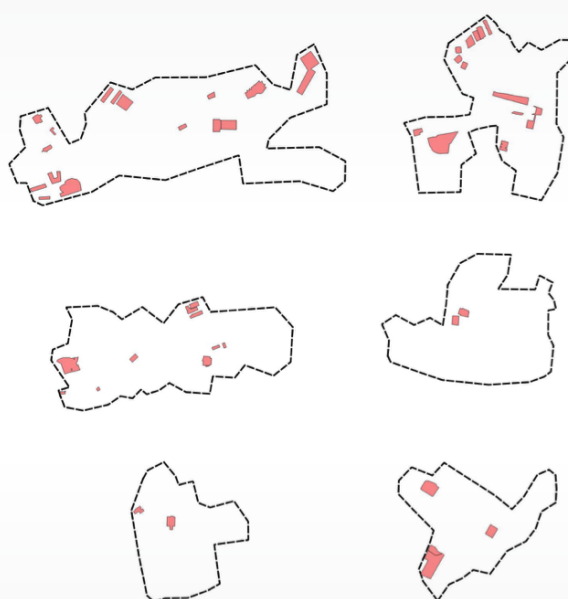




**Figure 9:** Location of all commerce activates surrounding the observed cable-car stations, with each colour representing a different type of commercial land-use. Clockwise starting at the top-left, La Aurora, Santo Domingo, Popular, Andalucía, Juan XXIII and Vallejuelos.

When the commercial facilities (regular, irregular and street vendors) are examined, the percentages for all the stations are roughly the same: regular between 53.8-69.1%; irregular between 15.7-30.4% and street vendors between 6- 23.9%. The one exception to this was La Aurora, where street vendors account for 49.5% of its commerce, 32.4% irregular and 16.2% regular.

The types of commerce observed in these cases follow the same pattern for each station to, with confectionary accounting for 19.7% in both lines, alcohol 11.4% in the first and 13.6% in the second, fast food 12.7% in the first and 9.6% in the second and general stores 8% in the first and 14.3% in the second. These were the most popular commercial activities. In the areas, which have a larger aggregated number of regular facilities there is an increase in clothes shops, bakeries, cafes and entertainment goods. When the street vendors are examined the main products sold were confectionary, fast food, juice and fruit and vegetables.



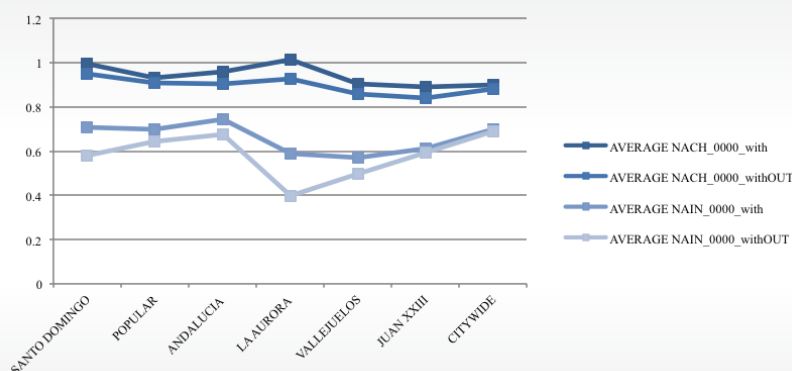
**Figure 10:** This indicates where the upgrading and municipal services are located in each observed case no other land-use is shown. Clockwise starting at the top-left, La Aurora, Santo Domingo, Popular, Andalucía, Juan XXIII and Vallejuelos

Finally, when the municipal services and upgrading interventions are mapped and there is a very clear imbalance, with the vast majority being located at the end stations (Figure 10). The largest variety is located at Santo Domingo, where there is a library, business centre, justice house, police station, hospital, sports grounds, schools and a church. At La Aurora there is also a wide-variety with multiple schools, a hospital, police station, community centre, sport hall (currently being built) and a market place. In contrast the other stations only have a handful of supporting interventions.

## FINDINGS

When the results of the spatial analysis are examined it becomes apparent how important the strength of the existing urban grid is, in terms of good 'through' and 'to' spaces. This allows the introduction of a new spatial connection to enhance the existing. This is especially true with the first cable-car line as the strength of the existing grid allowed the introduction of the cable-car line to enhance its neighbourhoods, whereas the weakness of the grid surrounding the second line shows how a single connection alone cannot reconfigure a neighbourhood. This is demonstrated in the spatial improvements at each individual station along the first line, especially Santo Domingo. Yet, this is not the case with the stations along the second line, where Vallejeulos and Juan XXIII show little signs of any improvements, which is representative of the surrounding urban grid being heavily disconnected from the whole city. One surprising finding was the large spatial improvements at La Aurora, which has a very broken urban grid (Figure 11). This was the largest improvement of any station, however this is because of its very low integrational starting point and even with the improvements, the integration values are still low.

When the NACH results are examined, the analysis successfully picks out the main 'through' spaces, which represents the principal bus and pedestrian routes. These prove to be significant with the first cable-car, as they pass perpendicular to each station providing connections with existing bus routes and allowing natural pedestrian movement to form local high streets. However, the second line is again different, as only La Aurora has a perpendicular 'through' space. With Vallejeulos there is no connecting road adjacent the stations, since this space is pedestrianised and with Juan XXIII the main connecting road runs parallel to the cable-car. With the first line the positioning of the cable-car stations along important 'through' routes has create a direct connection to the existing spatial network, which was not achieved with the second line. This demonstrates the importance of positioning new stations perpendicular to established 'through' space, allowing new spatial connections to expand beyond.

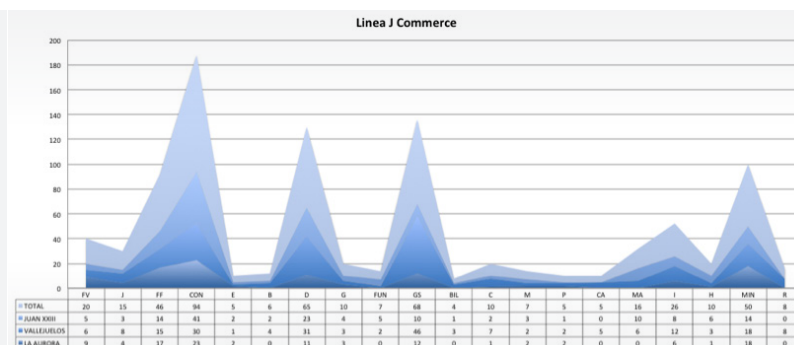


**Figure 11:** NAIN and NACH values for all stations and city, 'with' and 'without' the cable-car.

This suggests that the existing urban grid is important when positioning the cable-car lines, because where there is strong existing 'to' and 'through' spaces, the cable-car enhances the space, as observed with the first cable-car. This is significant since a cable-car is just one connection, which is also slow moving and has a limited passenger capacity. With the second line, the existing urban grid is broken, with La Aurora being built from scratch. Hence, without a good existing urban grid, the task of spatially enhancing a neighbourhood via a cable-car is more difficult.

The onsite observations also show a clear divide between the first and second line. This is observed through the aggregated numbers of commercial units, with the first line accumulating more than twice the commercial units, implying that the cable-car has had a larger commercial impact here (Figure 12).

However, when the types of facilities are examined the percentages are roughly the same for the 5 stations apart from La Aurora. This suggests that whilst the cable-cars may increase the number of commercial activities, it is not having a huge impact on socioeconomic conditions, since the types appear to be the same. The one exception to this is La Aurora, where the majority of the commercial facilities are street vendors and irregular facilities, accounting for over 80%. Yet, this is a consequence of the built environment, as the housing blocks have no facilities for commerce, so residents are forced to create their own.



**Figure 12:** The aggregated commercial activities for each type of commerce recorded, for both cable-car lines.

With the types of product sold, it is apparent that certain types of commerce located themselves with certain facilities. For example products like confectionary and mobile minutes are mostly sold from street vendors or irregular facilities, whereas products like clothes and fresh food are typically sold from regular facilities. However, these patterns are not always the same and a wide range of products is available from street vendor and irregular shopkeepers. This is evident in La Aurora, where the lack of regular facilities results in products that are usually confined to regular facilities, such as fresh vegetable and meat, being sold from street vendors (often from the back of a car) or make shift shops, where apartments have been self-modified. However, the variety of commerce is roughly the same throughout and again this could indicate that the cable-car is not having a huge socioeconomic difference on the neighbourhoods, since people are roughly buying the same products.

Whilst there is a certain level of consistency with commercial activities (with the exception of La Aurora), there is a much more inconsistency when it comes to the proportion of municipal interventions and public service in each neighborhood. This is obvious in Santo Domingo, where the majority of interventions along the first line are found, all within the surrounding areas of the cable-car station. In comparison the other two stations along this line received very few interventions. This ties in with past



commentaries that suggest the success of Santo Domingo is down to its large variety of interventions (Davila 2013). A similar pattern is observed with the second line, where La Aurora has many interventions, along with large areas of housing.

When each analysis is overlaid, what becomes apparent is the combined number of commercial units and their positioning on the urban grid is relatable to the spatial analysis results. This provides an interesting finding, as the neighbourhoods that are generally thought to be the most successful, are also the one with the strongest spatial network and largest commercial activities.

The relationship between the spatial network and commercial activity is visibly seen when comparing the results of the first cable-car line to the second line. With the surrounding areas of the first line, it is clear that the majority of commercial units position themselves along the most important 'through' routes, with the majority of regular facilities also positioned here. This clearly relates to the principles of the 'movement economy', since the shopkeepers and street vendors understand where the majority of people move (Hillier 2007). So whilst the spatial analysis may not show 'through' spaces being greatly improved by the cable-car, what is evident is the improvement of 'to' spaces, correlating to the large number of commercial activities. This corresponds to the previously discussion, that urban centres with strong 'to' and 'through' spaces become more resilient, which the large number of commercial activates indicate (Vaughan and Griffiths, 2013). However, the opposite is true in the areas surrounding the second line, here the weak spatial network correlates to a smaller number of commercial units.

This correlation between spatial connectivity and commerce starts to pinpoint some of the elements that make the cable-car successful. Revealing that the spatial qualities of the cable-car alone is not enough to transform a neighbourhood.

These finding become even evident when exploring individual stations and the case with the most positive impact is Santo Domingo. Here, the integration values are greatly improved by the introduction of the cable-car, helping to enhance existing strong 'through' spaces and here the largest number of commercial activities occur. Both Popular and Andalusia also have a strong correlation between good 'to' and 'through' spaces and commercial activities. Importantly these three stations are all located perpendicular to existing strong 'through' spaces.

On the second line, La Aurora repeats this same pattern of strong perpendicular through spaces, yet here there is less integration (even though this is greatly improved) and very little commercial facilities. This has resulted in the formation of what can be described, as an 'informal high street' made of street vendors occupying the road perpendicular to the station. This is in consistent flux because of a lack of permanency from physical facilities, always changing in terms of the number of street vendors, customers and types of vendors, all dependent on the time of day. Intriguingly, this suggests that even with the spatial grid being poorly integrated the basic setup allows for a basic high street to be formed, similar to the first line. Yet, this is different to the other stations along the second line. At Vallejuelos there is no direct connection between the station and a vehicular road, preventing fluid continuation from the station and perpendicular movement. What is also clear from this neighbourhood is how badly connected the station is to the main urban fabric, which itself is split in half, with an organically formed neighbourhood to one side and a gridded urban fabric to the other, neither connected with a vehicular road. The majority of the commercial activities is located in the organically formed area, which is this not directly connected to the cable-car, suggesting that the commercial activities here is not enhanced by increased movement. This may propose

that the cable-car has a small reach of influence, which would correspond to its slow and limited capacity as a form of transport.

Finally, Juan XXIII, which is reasonably integrated, has the principle 'through' space running parallel to the cable-car, providing no perpendicular connections to the rest of the city and not improving the existing grid. This is reflected in the distribution of commerce, as the shops are scattered across the neighbourhood, with no distinct high street. Then, along with Vallejuelos, there is a distinct lack of street vendors and where these do operate they are positioned directly opposite a busy building, such as a school, unlike other neighbourhoods where street vendors rely on the movement of people to position themselves.

## REFLECTIONS AND A CONCLUSION

This paper reveals some of the urban conditions that are necessary to allow an urban cable-car to have an important role in the transformation process of an informal settlement. However, in doing so it has also revealed local conditions that may affect the results, demonstrating the need to refine and improve certain methods for future research.

The principle methodology in this paper focused on an evidence-based method for measuring space and land-uses. Yet, in almost all of the cases examined movement is affected by extreme topology and the connectivity provided by the cable-car is very different, but neither are picked up using a standard Space Syntax model. Along with this, it is important to note that informal and irregular vendors are a hugely important source of commerce for informal settlements, yet their dynamic nature is hard to record using a standard static land-use survey, since they come and go at different times. Furthermore, when comparing similar cases, it does not reveal precisely what the neighborhood was like before the cable-car, especially with regards commercial land-uses, which makes the impact hard to measure.

As this research is taken forward it is important to reflect upon the elements of the research that need refining and improving. Whilst this paper has shown that evidence-based methodologies can be used to analysis the relationship between space and commerce in informal settlements, it is also evident that certain elements need to be more dynamic to pick up local conditions.

However the paper does starts to pinpoint certain spatial conditions necessary for a cable-car intervention to be successful. At a meso-scale there is the importance of targeting areas of high urban consolidation, which already provide reasonable existing integration with the city, even if this may appear configurationally poor. This helps the slow and limited capacity cable-car to optimise its impact. At a local scale, the positioning of stations on busy 'through' streets increases foot traffic enhances commerce, with more people occupying the streets. Therefore if the urban grid already provides good 'through' and 'to' space, the neighbourhood can become more resilient, thus encouraging more commercial activities. These elements are very apparent along the first line, yet very distant on the second line.

Finally, whilst it is difficult to associate the improvement of each neighbourhood to individual physical intervention it is hard to ignore the fact that many of the most important upgrading interventions were located in Santo Domingo, which has seen the greatest improvement. Yet, whilst Santo Domingo may have received greater investment than

other neighbourhoods, it has also greatly benefitted from the cable-car enhancing its existing positive spatial network, allowing commercial activities to thrive. It is these spatial elements that should not be neglected, especially when considering the failing of the second line.

Hence, the most important finding from this analysis is not about the impact of the cable-car and how it can spatially and commercially transform an informal settlement, but instead how it enhances what is already there.

Currently there is a big question about the spatial and social impact of urban cable-cars in informal settlements and what exactly the role of these are. By examining the case of Medellin, this paper has attempted to understand the spatial conditions necessary to allow local commerce to thrive and in doing so recognise how a cable-car acting as a spatial connection can enhance these. This is in an effort to understand the pivotal role spatial connections play in the transformation process of an informal settlement.

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# STREET REQUALIFICATION STRATEGIES: RECENT TRENDS IN LISBON METROPOLITAN AREA

**JOÃO RAFAEL SANTOS**

Universidade de Lisboa Portugal. E: jrs@fa.ulisboa.pt

## ABSTRACT

From a rather insipient state of networking and infrastructure provision, Lisbon has made considerable progress in the last three decades in framing what were splintered fragments of settlement into a stronger metropolitan armature. This armature can be assessed both at the metropolitan level and at the local levels, often in close relationship with public space improvements. Moreover, national and EU funding framework focused public urban regeneration investment on infrastructure and public space. After considerable efforts in delivering large scale motorway, railway and transit/subway systems, these heavy infrastructures are helping introduce a softer realm of public space and urban amenities in both central districts and peripheral areas.

Municipalities are the key players in setting up programs targeted at urban heritage districts, environmental qualification and promotion of soft mobility. Within these, requalification of existing streets has been used as part of various strategical frameworks. Some address mostly spatial quality issues, other include economic regeneration goals, others relate both existing and new streets as part of a complex urban reconfiguration process.

The paper presents a systematized overview of a set of recent street requalification operations in 10 sites across Lisbon metropolitan area. This systematization is framed under five fields:

- 1) The generic nature of urban intervention;
- 2) The location in relationship with the metropolis;
- 3) Integration in local urban networks;
- 4) Spatial and functional characteristics;
- 5) Project, funding and delivery framework.

Discussion highlights contributions for each case, while providing a common ground for identifying patterns of change in current Lisbon metropolis' streetscape.

## KEYWORDS

Street requalification, public space system, Lisbon Metropolitan Area



## **A TRANS-SCALAR APPROACH: FROM THE STREET TO THE METROPOLIS**

Streets have been a structural element in the process of making and shaping cities in the most diverse time and spatial contexts. The diversity of social, cultural and technological contexts in which space is both produced and practiced is translated in an extraordinary array of morphological diversity. It is, again, such diversity that makes cities unique and recognizable, open to unforeseen and a stage to conflict and creativity (Bohigas, 2004). The street is simultaneously a space and a place. As such, it holds a fundamental relationship between the physical, functional and socio-cultural dimensions (Ascher and Mireille, 2007). Its scales and configurations vary widely in time and geographical context. Yet a generic code stands at the roots of most streets despite of its context: a line of movement, a common ground accessible to all, a support for building structures which, in turn define its spatial and functional section. In western cultures, the street is clearly associated with the concept of public space, framing it also under another dimension: the socio-political realm where evolving, dialectical and often conflicting interests are played (Borja, 2003).

In a process usually identified around the transition from pre-industrial urbanism to urban modernity, streets have been criticised for their congestion, spatial enclosure, conflicting uses and unhealthy conditions. The Charter of Athens and the writings of Le Corbusier stand among the most prominent of such positions. Urban development framed after World War II resort to new spatial models in which streets and blocks gave way to free-standing building arrangements, distributed on a more free and fluid pattern over a generous public space and green surface. This detachment from the conventional street-based city came hand-in-hand with the explosion of car-dependent travel and commuting, new building typologies (i.e. malls and large retail facilities) and increasingly segregated functional zoning.

With the process of metropolization, supported by the confluent forces of industrialization, mechanization and car-based mobility, national and metropolitan motorways and fast-traffic roads start to play a fundamental role in the organization of larger urban territories. Worldwide responses to the explosive need of residential space, to the needs of industrial processes and traffic management, rely mostly on a technically efficient management of infrastructures (Neuman and Smith, 2010).

The modern metropolis finds its leit motiv in the spaces of fast mobility, in the formations linked to intersections and nodal interfaces, in the smooth organisation and parameterisation of fluxes and in reducing spatial friction.

In this context, not only did streets lost part of their fundamental role as the common ground for mixed uses, mixed travel flows and mixed practices of conviviality (Bohigas, op. cit.), the nature of public space too was largely reconfigured. On one hand, other spaces gained a prominent role as realms of sharing and conviviality, namely those privately-owned and managed such as shopping malls and some large scale urban projects. On the other hand, the potential of other spaces to become active in providing values usually associated with public space has also been on the rise: freeways, infrastructural spaces, greenways, empty and derelict land (Mossop, 2006).

The changing nature of public space is not necessarily a story of loss of references and lack of legibility – key characteristics of streets in conventional city spatial patterns. It can also be a creative play in which emerging traces of publicness arise as seeds of a multiple and highly diverse metropolitan landscape (Sieveerts, 2003).

These are the scales at which this paper's research is embedded: the scales in which both the extensive metropolitan fabric and the local shared space are combined. Streets, roads, railroads, parkways – they share the potential of making connection at the same time they provide the realm of being, using and living together – they are the spatial common ground.

The morphological and conceptual exploration of linear infrastructural spaces has been addressed by a number of authors (Ramos, 2015; Vecslir, 2007; Donini, 2008; Farhat, 2009), highlighting its capacity for a territorial vertebration, both in its longitudinal and transversal dimensions. These explorations are framed under a wider critical review of splintered forms of design, planning and governance of the modern city's infrastructural systems (Çelik et al., 1996). They are also a step forward in the critical renewal targeted at the understanding and design for such less canonical territories (Meijsmans, 2010).

Flows and places remain tightly grounded to a territorial matrix of interdependency between new and old infrastructure. More than often this duality between the logics of the system and the logics of the agora (Sieveerts, 2003) – after all a defining feature of metropolisation – has been reproduced in the professions and practices of urban and infrastructural planning. A re-balance of these logics has been widely claimed both for the street scale (Jacobs, 1962, Ascher and Mireille, 2007, Gehl, 2010) and for the larger territorial development (Ben-Joseph, 2005; Smets, 2005; Mossop, 2006), requiring refreshed tools for interpretation and design, sensitive to the specificities of our unconventional territories.

A return to the realm of street-making, redefining traffic-ridden streets into enjoyable urban avenues, has been in play in many cities and metropolises worldwide, not only from the stand point of spatial aesthetics but fundamentally as a critical reassessment of a structural framework at the city-scale and at the urban-metropolitan interfacing. Streets requalification projects have thus engaged with a complex layering of new functional, spatial and socio-economical demands: new flows (i.e. ecological structure, dedicated bus and bicycle lanes, wi-fi zones), new areas of permanence (i.e. sidewalk cafes, multi-functional facilities, temporary uses), new management processes (i.e. public funding criteria, local partnerships in project management, community-based maintenance and keeping). The areas where street requalification projects are being development have spread out considerably into new forms of settlement. Other than historical districts – for which project examples are widely known – many cities have been engaging with hitherto missed areas, such as peripheral districts, low density areas, illegal settlements, modern residential neighbourhoods, national roads and other heavy infrastructural spaces. Such trend brings forward an approach in which not only those spaces are acknowledged as legitimate parts of the metropolis, requiring a demanding and complex perspective on its spatial realm, but also are seen as part of the continuous and structural matrix on which contemporary urban landscape is layered.

## CHANGING LISBON METROPOLIS: MAKING PLACE FOR STREETS

From a rather insipient state of networking and infrastructure provision, Lisbon has made considerable progress in the last three decades in framing what were splintered fragments of settlement into a stronger metropolitan armature. This armature can be assessed both at the metropolitan level and at the local levels, often in close relationship with public space improvements.

The last decade can be seen as stage of transition in Lisbon's metropolitan infrastructural strata to what can be called as the layering of a connective fabric (Santos, 2012a). This fabric is established through: 1) the multi-scalar recombination of various mobility, supply and communications networks; 2) the development of well-connected patches of urban development bridging or regenerating spatial and functional gaps in the metropolitan fabric; and 3) the introduction of landscape and intermodal interfacialities in nodal spaces.

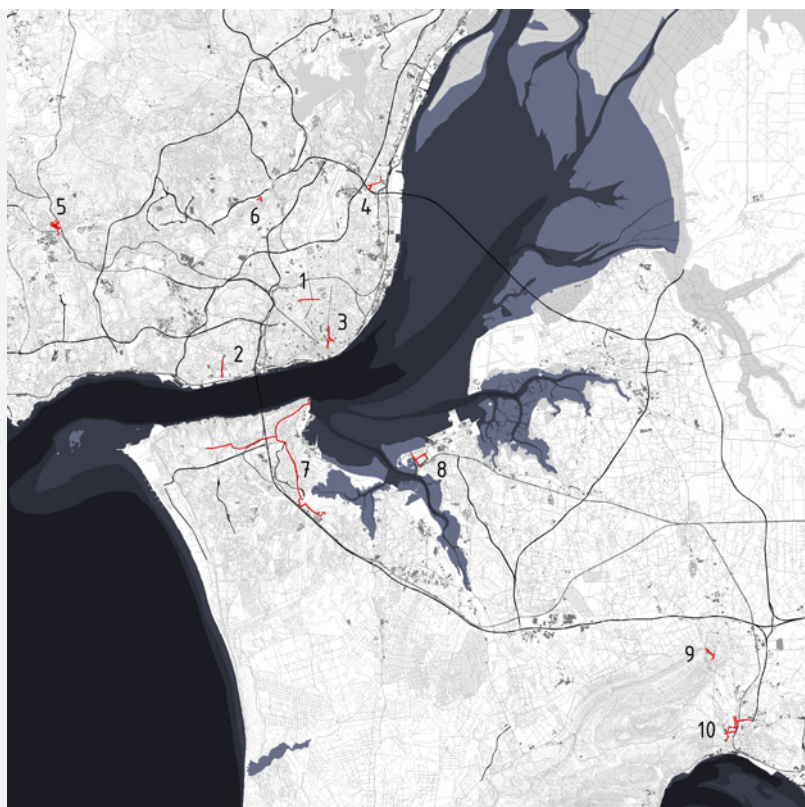
After considerable efforts in delivering large scale motorway, railway and transit/subway systems, these heavy infrastructures are helping introduce a softer realm of public space and urban amenities in both central districts and peripheral areas (Santos, 2012b).

Municipalities are the key players in setting up programs targeted at urban heritage districts, environmental qualification and promotion of soft mobility. Within these, requalification of existing streets has been used as part of various strategic frameworks (Coelho, 2012). Some address mostly spatial quality issues, other include economic regeneration goals, others relate both existing and new streets as part of a complex urban reconfiguration process (Balsas, 2007).

Particularly after Expo 98 project, in which a former industrial area was totally replaced to give way not only for the 1998 world exhibition, but also to a new lively mixed-use urban district by Lisbon's waterfront, new expectations regarding public space quality were spread to the professional institutional and society realms as a whole. Following that flagship experience, new urban requalification and regeneration ensued, with a strong funding support from European Union cohesion funds. Several medium-sized cities saw a meaningful upgrade in their public space, collective use facilities, mobility and environmental systems, as part of Polis Program (Ferreira, 2007). Resorting to various follow-up programmes, other cities have been able to target EU, national and municipal funds towards street requalification projects (SEAOT, 2008), of which a selection in Lisbon's Metropolitan Area is presented in the next chapter.

Despite a clear dependence of most projects on public funding, there have also been some cases in which public funding is combined with private investment as part of more complex urban redevelopment schemes. Public space upgrading in these cases is usually financed as counterparts, either of local taxation or infrastructural provision to new private projects.

Far from an exhaustive survey, a representative listing of exemplary projects is outlined in the next chapter (Tables 1 to 10). Ten different cases from seven municipalities showcase recent (post-2005) street requalification projects (Figure 1). This list is seen as a first step towards further research regarding the design, programming and socio-spatial discussion of the contemporary role of streets in metropolitan territories.



**Figure 1:** Map of project's location in Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Source: author, 2016

1 – Lisboa: Av. Duque de Ávila, 2 – Lisboa: Calçada da Ajuda, 3 – Lisboa: Mouraria, 4 – Sacavém: Rua do Estado da Índia, 5 – Cacém, 6 – Odivelas: Vale do Forno, 7 – Almada/Seixal: MST-EN10, 8 – Barreiro, 9 – Palmela, 10 – Setúbal.

## TEN PROJECTS: A SYSTEMATIZED OVERVIEW

A preliminary systematization of these case projects around five fields frames their complex spatial, functional and geographical relationships:

- 1) The generic nature of urban intervention (i.e. complex operations, network reconfiguration, street requalification, transport-related reconfiguration);
- 2) The location in relationship with the metropolis (i.e. historical districts, gridded expansions, suburban settlement, metropolitan street-road);
- 3) Integration in local urban networks (i.e. urban layout, mobility network and hierarchy, typo-morphological relationship, public space system, relationship with urban facilities and polarities, relationship with architectural and urban singularities);
- 4) Spatial and functional characteristics (i.e. street uses and activities, spatial and pavement partition, details and material features);
- 5) Project, funding and delivery framework.

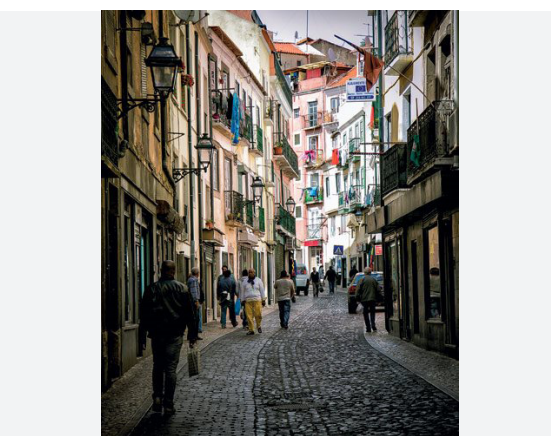




**Table 1 -** Av. Duque de Ávila



**Table 2 -** Calçada da Ajuda



**Table 3 -** Mouraria





**Table 4 -** Rua do Estado da Índia (Sacavém)



**Table 5 -** Cacém



**Table 6 -** Vale do Forno (Odívelas)



**Table 7 -** MST – Metro Sul do Tejo / National Road 10



**Table 8 -** Barreiro centre



**Table 9 -** Palmela historical center



## SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

An overview of the ten projects highlights several aspects of a renewed approach in Portuguese urban development strategies regarding the role of streets and the public space system. These projects are representative of a substantial number of similar interventions developed throughout the country, thus offering insight into recent trends in terms of planning, design, management and programmatic choices. Six trends can be highlighted:

- A **diversification of locational criteria**, considering not only central historical districts – for which there was already substantial experience and general acknowledgment – but also the importance of framing spatial quality in more recently developed territories. Fabric-making is a metropolitan wide process and the role of streets ranges from old picturesque urban landscapes to 20th century expansions and suburban sprawling settlements. In fact, with the majority of metropolitan population living outside of Lisbon's municipal boundaries, the need to develop requalification strategies with wide-range territorial scope is paramount.
- The acknowledgment of coherent linear spaces, **making streets where roads were**, reconfiguring them, improving the capacity to hold pedestrian traffic, qualified access to side activities and serial urban image coherence. In a cross-scale approach, conventional boundaries between centre and periphery, urban and suburban, street and road, are increasingly blurred. The experience of movement and its spatial qualities are not confined to the compact, central districts, bounded by the clear frame of streets. Acknowledging roads as part of a metropolitan public space system is an important contribution to work with the heterogeneous nature of contemporary city.
- A trend to **reconfigure structural circulation systems at various scales**, including public transport nodes and road re-networking. This trend is only possible to implement after considerable development in higher level infrastructure, allowing for alternative traffic flow and bypass strategies. Again, the role of larger scale territorial planning is fundamental in allowing local scale transformation.
- Solutions are increasingly offering **compatible and shared spaces between pedestrians and cars**, optimizing the space used for car traffic in order to return as much space as possible to people and active modes, such as cycling. This trend is associated with greater design concern to the efficient use of spatial resources. In spite of simplistic approaches, in which car traffic is totally excluded, the discussed projects allow for compatibility and sharing, acknowledging everyday life needs and not only scenic quality criteria.
- Several projects **combine streets requalification and green corridors development**, introducing complexity and diversity, while reinforcing the networked layers of the city and metropolis. Water management, river restoration, linear parks and tree and greenery design are becoming closely intertwined with street requalification strategies. This trend optimizes territorial resilience as fosters continuity and spatial drainage, storm water capacity and natural air flow. Particularly in areas strongly compromised by existing buildings and land uses, the lack of space for new parks and green areas can be tackled through a more distributed strategy based on the potential of linear spaces to become part of a stronger urban green infrastructure.

- Finally, there is also a **predominant strategy to concentrate investment only on public space** per se, that is, leaving much of the private building space around it to other actors. With much of the urban regeneration investment coming from European and national public funds, legislation and strategic framing prevents direct funding of private space. What these projects show is that continued attention must be placed on follow-up monitoring and engagement of local investors in order to multiply public investment on streets throughout the whole urban fabric. On the other hand, there are also some private-led projects in which a clear political guidance from local municipalities allowed for a balanced transformation at a larger scale, channelling counterpart funds to a systematic reorganization of streets and public space.

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# 'HOMOHABILIS' TIME FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT: A NANO-INTERMODAL STATION FOR BYBLOS- LEBANON

JIHAD KIAME

Beirut, Lebanon. E: jihad.kiame@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

### Belief

Regardless what material it is made of, a bus shelter is unsustainable as long as not part of a larger scale and comprehensive public space design intended to encourage the use of public transportation means on one hand, and non-motorized commuting modes on the other. A bus shelter has to be built, provided it is useful.

### Sustainability is a site-specific concept

Definition of sustainability must be reexamined according to the milieu for which one is seeking to achieve true sustainability. An absolutely unrenovable resource is Space. Space is abused whenever occupied by inconvenient elements, consequently wasted and hard to retrieve. Empty spaces are much more beneficial than those affected by a meager function.

### Declaration of intent

Since we believe that Public Transportation [**PT**] is about efficient networking and convenient public spaces for an easily accessible network, for this competition, we committed ourselves to highlight critical issues that have to be carefully looked at to increase the chances of achieving the expected goals from the bus shelter project at the indicated location.

Our proposal includes:

- Identification of other possible **PT** corridors.
- A sketch strategy for a proper distribution of **PT** platforms.
- An urban design scheme for the public space enhancement at the indicated location.
- An ambitious program for a "**Nano Intermodal Station**" [NIS] instead of a simple Bus Shelter.

### Byblos macro anatomy or the 3 major destinations

In a quick reading of the map of Byblos City and its extensions, **3 physical components** can be immediately distinguished:

- Ancient Byblos
- Medieval Byblos
- Sandy beaches

Those components are the **3 major destinations** for the Inhabitants, but more importantly for the Visitors who are mainly car dependent, since alternative commuting systems [in the present case buses] are neither attractive nor efficient enough.

## Assumptions for the travel pattern of potential public transportation commuters

Although doing a thorough analysis of the travel pattern exceeds the scope of our mission, it remains possible to understand at least the most important influential parameters with respect to the trips purposes, emphasizing the role of **the bus shelter & the adjacent footbridge** at the indicated location.

- Internal Trips:
  - o The major obstacle for internal Trips is the brutal cut caused by the highway. Most of the commuters have no other choice than driving their cars to move between western and eastern Byblos.
  - o At the indicated location, the existing footbridge does not constitute a true both ways liaison since no obvious inner public transportation means are found on both extremities for commuters to pursue their trips toward upper parts of Byblos where urban densities and activities are neatly higher.
- External trips:
  - o At the indicated location, the existing footbridge is mainly used by people from south eastern Byblos wanting to reach the actual bus stop underneath the bridge heading toward Beirut or other destinations to the south.
  - o Only few coming from central and northern Byblos [west & east] choose to do the same, since others would probably look for closer or more accessible bus stops.
- Tourism trips
  - o The existing footbridge is ideally located for bus commuters coming from all directions with the sandy beaches being their main destination.
  - o The intended location can take a bigger share of users if integrated to a local looped public transportation system servicing harmoniously all parts of the City among which the other 2 major destinations: medieval and ancient Byblos.

## The revival of old railway

In order to diversify the city's PT means and enhance conditions of its accessibility, the old railway has to resume its original vocation. The railway that converges to the indicated location invites us to think of the intended bus shelter as a transitional space between the bus lane on the highway and the railway reaching other coastal villages, towns and cities.

## The need for an adequate pedestrian infrastructure

Unlike Byblos mega interchange, an infrastructure crushing by its scale old, medieval and modern Byblos, the project endeavors to humanize the highway space by redeeming priority to pedestrians.

The project is seen as a pilot intervention longing to create a better balance between traffic, public transportation and soft commuting modes. By implementing the following recommendations, people can hopefully reclaim their public spaces and celebrate the unique qualities of the site. [look at relevant drawings for the numbers below]

## Roads

1. Increased highway / roads safety
2. Dedicated bus lanes
3. Incorporated bus bays
4. Reactivated old railway
5. Legible accesses and exits
6. Provided parking lanes

## Greenery

7. Enhanced picturesque surrounding
8. Increased safety using low green barriers
9. Harvested green energy at footbridge

## Pedestrian & bikes network

10. Upgraded footbridge with shades and rain shelter
11. Cycling lanes...
12. ...and a sidewalk overlooking the sandy beaches
13. Safe pedestrian crossing to NIS
14. Stairs equipped with platforms for the disabled
15. Shortened crossing by adding and optional lift
16. Legible stations provided on the highway sides

## Facilities

17. Bikes Park positioned to capture incoming passengers
18. [BYBLO.SouthWest] as the main station / landmark
19. [BYBLO.SouthEast] as the secondary station
20. Improved footbridge functionality and design

## Process toward a Nano Intermodal Station instead of a simple bus shelter

1. A bus stop... a place where buses stop for passengers to board or alight from a bus. Sheltered...for increased comfort and safety.
2. Connecting to the adjacent [proposed to be reactivated] old railway located to the west...
3. Adapting to the uneven topography between the identified public transportation corridors...
4. Linking and protecting the back to back stops...
5. Providing a wide angle balcony overlooking the sandy beaches, with travelers' amenities inside [coffee shop, news box, Cash point, and bikes for sale or rent, toilets...]
6. Protected with a resilient shell...
7. Shaped to deal with heat and glare effect and speared with a vertical water tank becoming the station's main sign.

This proposal [BSC.0016 ] does not stick to the initial terms of the Competition. We were simply motivated to show what could be done at & around the indicated location, basing our strategy on hooking the intervention to the nearby railway. We also incorporated in our design another shelter to the east side of the highway and the footbridge uplifted, in order to achieve a totally new pedestrian and public transportation landscape.

## **KEYWORDS**

Nano-intermodal station, bus shelter, space

# "HOMO MOBILIS" TIME FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

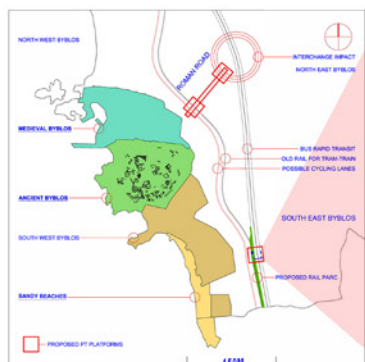


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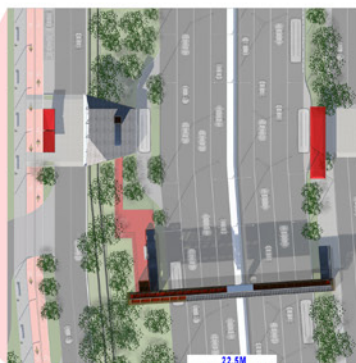
PORTUGAL: ELECTRIC RAILWAY DATES 1904, RESUMING ITS ORIGINAL ROUTE... CONSIDERED AS HISTORICAL HERITAGE THAT MUST BE PRESERVED.

**UNFOLLOWING THE BRIEF.** Our poster is a compressed version of an architectural design competition for a "sustainable" bus shelter on Byblos highway. After a detailed examination of the specified site, we shifted toward designing a "NANO INTERMODAL STATION" that could simultaneously act as a bus lane and to the local railway. BELIEF Regardless of the material it is made of, a bus shelter is unsustainable as long as it is not included into a comprehensive public space design intended to encourage the use of public transportation and non-motorized commuting means. A bus shelter has to be built, provided it is useful. **SUSTAINABILITY IS A SITE-SPECIFIC CONCEPT.** Definition of sustainability must be reconsidered according to the relevant environment. An absolutely unrenounceable resource is Space. Space is abused whenever occupied by inconvenient elements, consequently, wasted and hard to retrieve. Empty spaces are much more beneficial than those affected by a meager function. **STRATEGY.** Since Public Transportation is about efficient networking and convenient public spaces, for the proposed design, we committed ourselves to highlight critical issues that have to be carefully looked at to increase the chances of achieving the project expected goals. Our proposal for the NIS is therefore based on: 1/ A sketch strategy for a comprehensive public transportation master plan for Byblos, 2/ An urban design scheme for the public space enhancement at the indicated location.

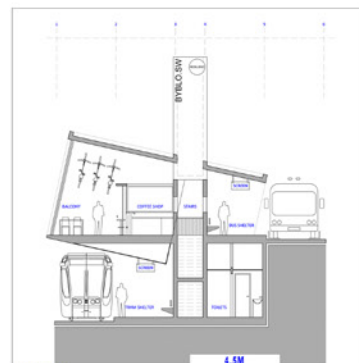
**THE NEED FOR AN ADEQUATE PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE.** Unlike Byblos mega interchange—an infrastructure crushing by its scale old, medieval and modern Byblos—the design endeavors to humanize the highway space by redeeming priority to pedestrians. The project is seen as a pilot intervention longing to create a better balance between traffic, public transportation and soft commuting modes. Consequently, people can hopefully reclaim their public spaces and celebrate the unique qualities of the site.



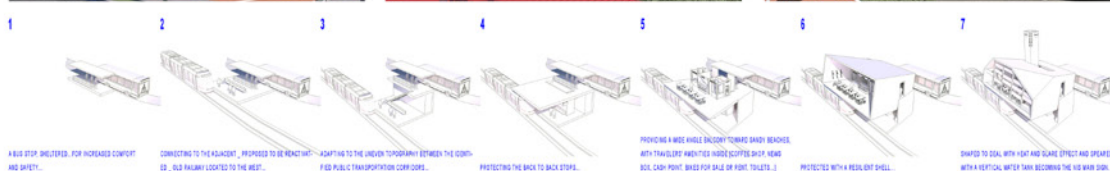
### SKETCH STRATEGY FOR MOBILITY PLATFORMS DISTRIBUTION



URBAN DESIGN SCHEME FOR PUBLIC SPACE ENHANCEMENT



NIS SECTION



"Aller le plus vite possible, le plus loin ou le plus souvent possible, ne constitue plus la condition nécessaire ni suffisante d'une bonne mobilité. Ce qui compte désormais, c'est la richesse des opportunités, des rencontres, des expériences procurées ou favorisées par nos déplacements."

Homo mobilis. le nouvel âge de la mobilité - Éloge de la reliance - Georges Amar







# TRACK 5

## **T5** RIGHT TO STREET: GENDER ISSUES, CONTESTED SPACES, AND TERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Track chair | **HEBA ABOU EL FADEL**

Alexandria University

Co-chair | **Dr. MAYA ANBAR-AGHASI**

College of Arts and Sciences, American University of Sharjah

### **DESCRIPTION**

The right to street can be looked at as a miniature representation of the right to the city, a continuous interplay between public and individual rights and empowering urban inhabitants. The track can be divided into three main categories: WHAT kind of rights, WHO it is addressed to and HOW it is regulated.

In the social sense, streets for urban inhabitants can be looked at as arenas for individual and group expression, a ground for dialogue, debate and exchange of ideas, spaces for leisure, performance and display, places for economic survival and refuge. How spaces for those rights are distributed along with the intersection of race, class and gender, is the main focus of the track. Different issues can be addressed: urban management (policies, regulations and legislations); controlling street functions, as trading and occupation (street vendors) along with imposed uses (homelessness); granting Safe access to different user groups (Gender issues), and regulating social conduct; social norms and expectations in this shared public space.

The right to street is a multi-disciplinary broad realm that can encompass, Architecture, urban planning, urban design, urban sociology, urban management, laws, and regulatory aspects.

### **KEYWORDS**

contested, diversity, gender, space, street, territory, transformations.



ID72

## THE VISIBILITY OF SPACE. MIGRANTS, PLANNING POLICIES AND DIVERSITY

**MARIA GRAZIA MONTELLA**

MIGRINTER, Université de Poitiers France, and Sapienza Università di Roma Italy.

E: maria.grazia.montella@univ-poitiers.fr, mariagrazia.montella@uniroma1.it

### ABSTRACT

With The visibility of the space is an idea borrowed from Jacques Derrida “De l’hospitalité” and reshaped in “non-conditional visibility” by two Italian scholars (De Leo; Belli, 2013). It argues that some spaces in the city present multifaceted characters due to the different uses to which they are subjected by the city users. This visibility of a space can be a foremost concern to understand the linkage between urban policies and socio-territorial integration processes of the immigrants. Notably, marketplaces are characterized by a pivotal capacity in aggregating and meeting different people. Moreover, they are places where the overlapping of functions and purposes between residents and immigrants is extremely visible. Urban planning policies aim to manage these space in some ways depending on the peculiarity of each city and they are trying to formulate new approaches to face their fluidity. The rhetoric of the diversity is often the rationale for these policies and in the last decade it overtook the multiculturalist approach. Its consequences on the ground, as many evidences from some European cities demonstrate, often contribute to increase social fragmentation and the ethnicization of the space rather than enhancing inclusivity. The paper presents the outcomes of a PhD fieldwork conducted in two multi-ethnic city market in Rome and Amsterdam following an interdisciplinary approach between anthropology and urban planning.

### KEYWORDS

Visibility, multiethnic markets, insurgencies

## THE NON-CONDITIONAL VISIBILITY AND THE MULTICULTURAL SPACE

This paper exposes some of the outcome of my PhD's research. This is a research intertwining two disciplines, urban anthropology and urban and regional planning and for this reason its methodology is quite hybrid even though it tends more towards the ethnographic approach. I've used several technics of observation and shadowing together with random interviews with the different stakeholders and a second round of in-deep interviews. Then I studied official documents from the municipal archives and from the Rome City Council meeting together with an analysis of the state of the art.

Firstly, this work starts from the will to focus on an epidermic dimension of the migrants' living in the city, that one of the perceived visibility of the multicultural spaces. This is usually seen as characterized by the fact that different kind of populations use these spaces. I argue instead that the visibility is made of different layers of cultures, way of using (and misusing) the space and everyday formal and informal practices that together shape the perception of a space as multicultural. Secondly, I found that this concept of visibility has been used by several scholars applied to the religious contested space in the contemporary cities (Belli & De Leo, 2011). But what interested me the most was the adjustment of this concept that comes from the derridean concept of "non-conditional hospitality", in a new unit of analysis namely the "non-conditional visibility". This term means a total welcoming and boosting of multicultural spatial devices and territorial cultural marks as well as the derridean non-conditional hospitality means a total welcoming of the Other in the space of the We. Even many sociologists found the concept of visibility suitable for analyzing dynamics and mechanisms within urban and contested public spaces. Padua's case (Cancellieri & Ostanel, 2015) is one of the numerous examples showing how different usages of these spaces by the immigrants generate a sense of displacement or loss of belonging in the Italian resident population. This way of thinking at the space as prismatic, multifaceted and a vector of the cultural encounter is quite revolutionary if we look at the present planning policies in European cities which aims could vary but who are almost the same in promoting a restriction of the use of public spaces to an always fewer number of "normalized" citizens.

In the Italian experience, the non-conditional visibility finds very few examples of application. One of them is probably the market of Porta Palazzo in Turin even though the show of spatial devices are limited to the advertisement of ethnic food in order to enhance the market as a touristic site. Actually the revolutionary proposal of this non-conditional visibility struggles with the stiffness of the planning system and the ordinary management of the public spaces. Urban planning values are perceived as neutral and universal whereas we know that they are the outcome of a determined rationale, culture and geography (Qadeer, 1997). When different usage of space meet each other's it happens that the space itself becomes a political battlefield generating even more rules and obligations trying to overcome the difficulties of management through a more strict set of regulations. This is the case of Veronetta district in Verona (Briata, 2014), historically home for immigrants both from the south of Italy and foreigners, and for the students due to the proximity of the university campus. Several social changes in the districts led to an always more explosive situation: the turnover of traders in the neighborhood shops, the remarkable presence of a micro-criminality and of marginal groups of population increased the media discourse about the social dangerousness of the neighborhood. In the last 10 years all the municipal governments have tried to face this problem by different means: the Neighborhood Agreements in 2006 within the Verona 2020 Strategic Plan; an increased presence of military force and the installation of electronic surveillance system and last the anti-alcohol decree and the suspension

of the allotment of commercial licenses. According to Briata's comments, the major problem in the Veronetta's case was the misunderstanding of the need of an integrated approach for the neighborhood that would go beyond the single problems to see them in a more complete and complex frame. The same discourse could be made for several other cities in Italy and it leads to the power of destabilization that the newcomers have on the usage of the space in the city that determines their integration or their exclusion from the city/district.

How urban planning can respond to this demand for spatial change brought by the new populations? I argue that multicultural planning can succeed in the goal of producing and managing real multicultural spaces using the non-conditional visibility as a paradigm of action. According to Mohammed Qaddeer "multicultural planning is not a distinct genre of urban planning. The touchstone of this practice is the sensitivity of the planning process to cultural diversity" (Qadeer, 1997) and I can add that it is a strategy of making reasonable accommodations for the culturally diverse needs of the whole population in a city or a neighborhood. By and large urban planning practice define itself as culturally neutral with regards to the aims of its interventions in the city. The same happens if we speak with urban planners who define themselves as social value free technicians and so their actions when dealing with the managing of the space. As far as we know urban planning discipline and practices are instead overflowing with geographical, ethnic and cultural determined values that serve as the basis for the construction of norms and regulations. Indeed the space is probably the most visible field in which these values show themselves transforming the city's territory into a battlefield for collective and individual affirmation of cultural rights. In fact planners and planning practices shape the profile and sometimes also the use of the space. That's why urban planners are seen in some literatures (Davidoff, 1965) (Fainstein, 2009) (Sandercock, 2004) as policy-makers in *latu sensu* or at least agents of change while expressing a political will. To sum up we can say that if on the one hand multiculturalism affects urban planning practices by putting them under the light of social values and multiple public interests; on the other hand multiculturalism underlines the cultural bias in the perceived universalistic planning criteria and it kicks out from the discourse the presumption of urban planners to be mere technical practitioners.

## **MULTIETHNIC MARKETS AS VISIBLE SPACES AND THEIR ROLE IN URBAN INTEGRATION DYNAMICS**

The analysis of urban multiethnic markets comes from a raising of importance they had in the last years both in Italy and in Europe, due to their role in the neighborhood gentrification. The constitution in the municipal councils of departments for the management of the markets, restorations and relocations of many of them with all the constraints and social problems that these changes could generate, raised the attention of mass media and academics. Therefore as collective and public spaces, markets are beyond the mere economic dimension. Often they are the most relation-intensive place in the neighborhood, being the point of convergence for different needs. For the first generation of immigrants usually they represent the first kind of job they manage to find, mostly thanks to the network of family and friends (FIERI-Camera di Commercio di Torino, 2010). In these markets, places familiar both to the immigrants and to the old residents, the first meeting between them comes with their mutual recognition: the main relationship between the trader and the customer is in this case much more important than a recognition of their legal status (Watson, 2006). Moreover, the markets have a variety of standardized procedures and other informal practices, circumstances



and actions that become habits for both market users and traders. Habits which, in the case of multi-ethnic markets, are often hybrids between two cultures or manifestations of similarities that make the culture of the Other closer to Own .

The two cities in Southern Europe that have acted as a forerunner for the promotion of urban policies aimed at the modernization and enhancement of some city markets have been Barcelona and Turin. In the first case, the city of Barcelona engaged since 1990 in several huge revitalization projects aimed at reconstituting the social fabric of the historical city center that lied in a state of neglect and was home for the most deprived part of the population. Diverse interventions were made to ameliorate the historical buildings as well as the public infrastructures as the markets. Especially the former passed through a process of simple revitalization or restoration while others had been newly created and the entire process aimed at boosting local commerce also through the insertion of new public services in the markets. This model has been called the Barcelona Remodeling Project and it has been exported and duplicated in other cities in Spain. In Italy, Turin was the city that tried to replicate the Barcelona Remodeling with a more emphasized social goal: making the Porta Palazzo market a more inclusive space and a site for the so-called “alternative tourism”. The project started in 1998 and a part of it is still ongoing and since that date it succeed in its goal to revitalize both the market and the area nearby.

The successful example of these two cities with the need to meet the demand for cleaner, nicer and livable spaces, pushed other cities to promote renovation program for their markets. Here we examine two multiethnic markets, one in Rome and one in Amsterdam, which had been part of two bigger neighborhood renovation project and which are still in the spotlight. Before presenting the two case study, it is worth spending few words on the neoliberal policies that implied the usage of these space and the discourse on diversity, where present.

## NEOLIBERALISM AND URBAN PLANNING POLICIES

The economic and financial dimension of urban planning project has taken an increasingly significant importance in the general framework of planning policies and following the economic crisis of 2008-2009, we can confidently say that it has become the key worry for the promoters of the municipal projects.

It must first specify that, at least originally, urban planning was seen as a form of public action, managed by the state to provide basic goods and services for citizens. It is true that this definition forgets an important part which is the part often played by a third actor, other from the state or the citizens, acting as intermediary between the two parties involved and can sometimes make itself the stakeholder for proposals (Pizzo, 2015). These are associations, neighborhood committees, interest groups and so on and so forth. Already in the 70s, in Italy and in Europe, we were witnessing a gradual integration, within the strict planning regulations, of a new element that looks like the best solution to mitigate rigidities. Capitalism in its economic form of neoliberalism engaged in planning and decision-making process for planning, trying (and often succeeding) to model the space of the city in order to get more profit. Following the Planning Theory, neoliberalism is “an essential description of the political trends and bureaucratic transformations forming the conditions under which planners work” [Sager, 2011 in (Pizzo, 2015)]. Lefebvre has extensively analyzed the mechanism according to which capitalism reproduces itself through the use of urban spaces, changing the way we use the space. What we emphasize here, however, is the more alibis with which, in Italy, we have justified this progressive neo-liberalization of urban planning policies. Firstly,

in Italy urban planning falls within the administrative law and therefore has a legislative and regulatory framework well defined and equally hard. The Italian fundamental urban planning law (Law 1150) dates back to 1942 and in more than seventy years of Italian history several updates and changes have occurred that, however, failed to construct an organic corpus. Furthermore, the reform of state governance with the transfer to the regions of many powers, including those relating to the management of their territorial planning, increased the forest of measures, arrangements and visions about the role of the different actors involved in the planning and decision-making processes (Pizzo, 2015). In this frame, the neo-liberalization came as a salvation because the policy-makers could justify the trespassing of these restrictive laws within the context of a simpler and cheaper way towards the renovation of the planning model. The presumed ability of neoliberal solutions to rejuvenate the system paved the way for their indiscriminate use. Public-private partnerships, building permits in exchange of public services, concessions of public service in return for improved performance in their management are some examples of the actions that several cities put in place. Clearly there are also cases in which these solutions have actually represented an improvement but unfortunately the gap is very high between the costs and the benefits, in terms of exclusion of certain communities of citizens from services to which previously they had access to it. In the economy of this research the forms of neoliberal policies that mainly concern us are two: the project financing and (express or implied) gentrification practices with particular attention to the issue of diversity, sometimes excluded from the design discourse, sometimes used as a rhetorical opening to reach often opposite goals.

## **THE PROJECT FINANCING POLICY FOR THE NUOVO MERCATO ESQUILINO IN ROME**

The case of Nuovo Mercato Esquilino is emblematic to understand how in reality, the difference between a successful or failed policy is very tight and as some adjustments used as diversions [detournements (Olivier de Sardan, 2008)] during or after the project can preserve the initial goal. In this first case, the acting multiculturalism of the market and the neighborhood area is totally overlooked. The issue of the visibility comes out in two different way: on the one hand, the relocation of the market acts like an invisibilization of its structure spoiling it of its very emblematic essence of reference point in the neighborhood; on the other hand the relocation failed in the attempt to make the market more accepted<sup>1</sup> by the resident population in the area and shifted the balance of the neighborhood delicate equilibrium producing the will to misrecognize it as the same reference point it was before. In this case the non-conditional visibility can represent a way to solve some of the nodal problems, through a new consideration of the market space as a value for the neighborhood thanks to its multicultural features that could attract the touristic flow and at the same time draw the attention of the municipality on its management.

The Nuovo Mercato Esquilino has undergone a lot of pressure to move it from the central square of the district, where it was located since its beginning in the early 1900, because it made inaccessible the square as well as being aesthetically unpleasant because of its closed fixed benches. Numerous projects have been presented over the years but it is only in 2011 that the market was ready to leave the square and to move indoors. This step was achieved thanks to the first Italian project financing prepared for over two years by the market traders with the Municipality of Rome. Generally and as it is now understood, the project financing works in a way which is the basis of public-private partnership: the municipality launches a call for project ideas and then on these

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<sup>1</sup> It was relocated foremost for a lack of sanitation standards

proposals it opens the dialogue among the interested departments and private companies to deepen the implementation mode and acquire all the necessary information to present the preliminary design for each market. After this phase the projects developed by the Department are put out to tender. The criteria for evaluating the offers received are contained in the notices and cover economic, technical, social (e.g. sustainability of the market) and architectural quality. The screening with the creation of a ranking it is made by the municipality itself, which appoints an assessment panel evaluating the score of each proposal (with a certain arbitrariness margin) determining the ranking and then the winner of the tender to which award the intervention. Of course the operation must submit simultaneously benefits for public administration, in this case to get the renovation or improvement of markets without spending public money and a gain for the private operator, which must derive an income that balances investments. The agreement provides that the municipality gives to the private a concession of all or part of the market (for example the underground garages) for 90 years in exchange for refurbishing of the market (and its annexes) (difendiamoimercatirionali, 2012).

In fact, the project financing that has characterized the shift of the Esquilino market in the two new sites of the former barracks Sani and Pepe, had very different characters. There were no third parties who have submitted projects but the operators themselves which have been formed cooperative few years before , identified the spaces within the district for a relocation of the market as it abided by , as much as possible , the idea of centrality and characterizing the activities of the entire area. It is worth noting that from the beginning the cooperative was formed by a mix of market operators, both Italian and foreigners, who voluntarily participated there. The presence of private parties in addition to the operators was represented by the company for the supply of water and electricity in Rome, ACEA, and the International Franchising company Radisson Hotels. The two parties were competing for two adjacent buildings to the new market area, the former Centrale del Latte and another nearby former barracks , which would provide additional parking for the market customers. The project submitted envisaged a restructuring of two former barracks for the relocation of the market, the demolition of the third barracks and the subsequent construction of a four star hotel with underground parking and use of the building of the former Centrale del Latte as a cabin for high voltage and point of production of solar energy by ACE . Originally, the project also provided for the recovery of the building of the State Mint to be entrusted by the Sapienza University, but for lack of funds has not been realized. The cooperative of market operators has thus taken charge of the so-called business risk, by investing in the project of relocation about 3 billion of lire (former Italian currency before euro), part of which went to the Ministry of Defense, which transferred the ownership of the former barracks to the Municipality of Rome in exchange for two areas in the south outskirts of Rome (Cecchignola), as guarantee for the transaction. The rest was used for the restoration, bounded for barracks Sani by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, and for the adaptation of the place for a market use. The project was completely free of cost for the Municipality that however ensured the payment of the rent on the public land in percentage of the size of the banks. In addition, the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University Sapienza would occupy the upper floors of the new barracks Sani, ensuring another economic entry for the Municipality. Thus in 2001 the Esquilino market becomes the New Esquilino Market and sacrifices the "road visibility" to the comfort of an inside sheltered. In general it seems that the project financing of the Esquilino market has worked well, although the project did not include an explicit reference to the multicultural situation of the market area.

## Multicultural insurgencies in the Nuovo Mercato Esquilino

Since 2001 the Economic Department of the Rome City Council replaced the Planning Department for the management of the market, while the latter still holds the hot potato of accessibility and viability in the area. Furthermore an additional beautification program is now targeting the Piazza Vittorio square and some streets close to the market. The main problem that is actually misunderstood by these policies is the fact that the neighborhood is divided in at least two main parts: a first one adjoining with the central station, Roma Termini, a sort of no-man's land home for Chinese business bordering on illegal, homeless and jobless people and migrants with no permission to stay; a second one perfectly gentrified, meeting point for artists, hipsters and young cultivated people. The dividing point is exactly the major square, Piazza Vittorio. The market seems to be the point of junction of these two souls, with all the contradictions that come from this. It is the real crossroad between the two parts of the neighborhood and it gathers people from the two sides; moreover it attracts people from all over the cities, mostly immigrants who want to do their grocery shopping for the week while meeting their friends and relatives, living in other parts of the city who go to the market for the same reason. This entails a clash of practices in the use of the space both in the market and outside that generates a sense of chaos and insecurity in the national population living in the area (a large amount of stalls in the streets and in the porches along the market that reduce the accessibility to the streets and to the sidewalks, exotic restaurants open all day long with groups of people shouting and laughing in foreign languages in the street, people hanging around with nothing to do, and so on).

Also in the market we can observe similar but more organized practices suggesting the presence of diverse needs to be satisfied. The vendors in the markets are seen as foreigners and some of them still think about themselves as foreigners but instead there are some others who proudly show their double nationality or belonging to two cultures. The latter are in fact the most engaged in the traders' cooperative's steering committee and they wanted since the beginning of the new market deal to reduce the conflicts and to foster the feeling of belonging to a unique market in the city. Attempts to create a better work environment for everybody through special lessons on the Italian legislation about food treatment and sanitation standards; creation of informal networks to get a job within (or outside) the market; creation of a conflict-resolution front desk inside the market; opening of a first-aid station for anyone in need (also for those people wandering along the market area who are excluded from the national health care service); informal ways of taking care of the children inside the market while mothers are working or doing grocery. I argue that these practices are a direct response to some gap into the management policies of the market and of the multicultural issue in the city of Rome. They are a sort of tailor-made exit option within a formal context (the market itself) made for meeting the different needs that otherwise will be not satisfied. The lack or the chronic shortage of public structures for the care of children, the difficulties of getting a job through the legal ways, the lack of concern for the work conditions in the market are the principal causes of the birth of those insurgent practices that in this case are coloring themselves with multicultural nuances. Indeed they are insurgent in a very unique way following what James Holston means by insurgencies "Practices through which people problematize projects of city planning, development, law, and government. Practices that work against established conditions of inequality and provide alternatives for including citizens and distributing rights" (Holston, 1998). In Holston's perspective these practices are pieces of a more complex mechanism of reaction to the policies and sometimes, as in the Brazilian case, they take the shape of revolutionary practices. In my case, I affirm that they are a monadic practices, detached from a general

frame of policies, although they reveal some problems entangled both in the planning process and in the more general policy making process, that are usually misunderstood or hidden and that can be listed as follows:

- A total underestimation of the importance of cultural differences, above all in the use of the space, and of the fact that these differences change, they are not fixed instead adjustable, flexible and dynamic (Zoletto, 2002);
- Migrants bring with them a huge amount of different practices and some of them could be seen as illegal or could be in contrast with the customary and formal understanding of space. The Italian technical concept of a "secure space" in an example.
- The lack of recognition of the existence of multiple public interests, sometimes struggling against each-others;
- The underestimation of the power of the multicultural planning in managing some key issues involving the space of the market as a public and accessible space.

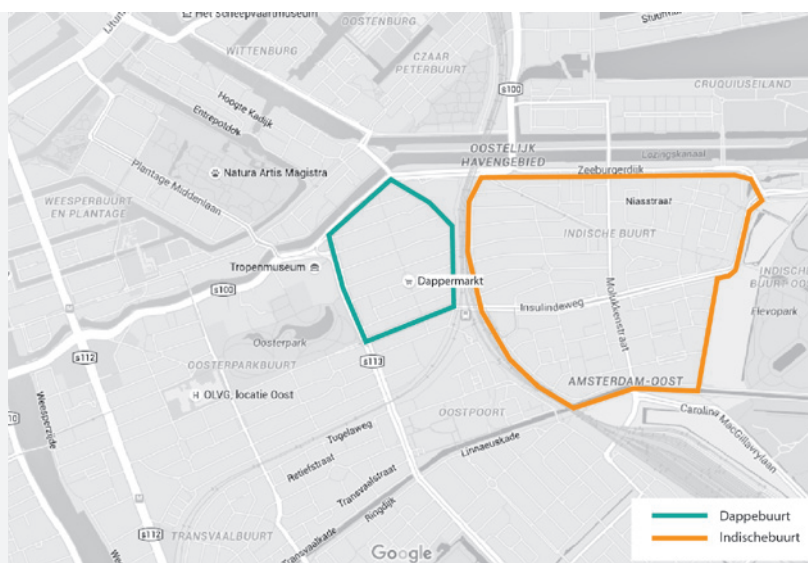
The misunderstanding of these points produce a concrete spatial drawing of the market area in which the different subjects involved plays their role individually instead of cooperating with others. The different interests clash against each-others producing, at a spatial level, room for interstitial practices. This so-created space become home for illegal traffics, business and social disorders. Instead of being represented as a clash of multiple interests that could be managed if understood and treated well, it is seen as the result of a lack of security and iron hand towards the so-called newcomers. Thus, instead of drawing attention on the multicultural feature of the conflict and promoting a resolution through new urban planning strategies, it remains locked into the label of security issue to be treated through a reinforced military presence. These points lead to the very overriding question: can the Italian urban planning be involved in the managing of the multicultural space as could have been the case of Nuovo Mercato Esquilino?

The declined power of the urban planning department in the municipality of Rome is maybe a sign of the will to throw in the towel or simply an acknowledgement of the scarce expertise that urban planners have in managing multicultural issues. In the analysis of the documents produced on the subject by the Municipality of Rome it is clear that the market's space is divided into an inner and an outsider space. While the former is managed from the department of commerce, the latter is ruled from the department of planning concerning the viability, accessibility and the licenses for the occupation of public land. In fact the possible multiethnic nature of these spaces is not mentioned anywhere and as a consequence the necessity to manage them as multicultural are not taken into account. Even if a discourse on the multiculturalism is largely due in such big city as Rome, it is eventually almost never officially tackled. In this context it comes to addiction the will of a part of the resident population to normalize their neighborhood, in the sense that they strongly want to clean it , rationalize it and try to hide as much as possible the acting presence of the immigrants. Otherwise other residents are trying to catch this multiethnic feature to enhance the potential of the area. It is worth noticing that these are often the gentrified residents of the other side of the neighborhood that are scarcely concerned by the real multi-ethnicity and its inconvenience. Here the very own role of Italian urban planning is at stake, its reconfiguration when dealing with the integration of different populations in the city is urgent.



## GENTRIFICATION POLICIES AT DAPPERMARKT, AMSTERDAM

The entire district of Amsterdam South is affected from about five years by substantial urban changes, concerning rehabilitation of buildings, reconstruction of roads and modification of public spaces. The attention of the Amsterdam Municipality, however, have particularly concentrated on a district, Indischebuurt, the multicultural district par excellence, in a major and very explicit gentrification effort in order to redevelop the area and make its multiculturalism a factor of attraction. As one can read on the Amsterdam City Council website: “Amsterdam East is a vibrant multicultural area in a process of gentrification. In a way it can be compared to De Pijp of 10 to 20 years ago” (Amsterdam City Council, 2016). The De Pijp is the nightlife district of Amsterdam youth, one where trendy bars mix with coffee shops and tourist shops. The Indischebuurt is a narrow area between the two zones, on the IJ harbor (one of Amsterdam’s rivers) with one of the largest city parks, the Flevopark, and Dapperbuurt next to another park, the Oosterpark (Fig.1). The neighborhood was born around the beginning of 1900, when Amsterdam began to expand eastward to cope with population growth and provide to urbanization of thousands of working families, mostly of lower social classes. A new wave of arrivals during the 60es and 70es sees a repopulation of the area thanks to the immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and Surinam, later even students and artists begin to live both in the district and in the neighboring areas such as Dapperbuurt, thanks to the minimum rent and the low living cost. Slowly the district began to expand and the new inhabitants border on the near Dapperbuurt thanks to the attraction pole represented by the Dappermarkt market. This was (and still is) one of the cheapest in Amsterdam, with a varied offer of food and vegetables next to a reserved space for second hand clothing and textile at popular prices and miscellaneous services (repair of watches, small appliances, optical services). Located in a border area between two districts shrunk in a full gentrification process (Indischebuurt and Dapperbuurt) it offers many points of attraction such as the proximity to the city center (about 15 minutes by tram), good public transport connections (next to the station Amsterdam Muiderpoort and served by three tram lines and several bus lines that touch both the periphery and the city center), and not least the relatively low cost of real estate. Symbolically, the market divides (or perhaps connects) the poorer eastern part of the neighborhood from the west characterized by the presence of a new middle class (Janssen, 2014).



**Figure 1:**  
plan of the area

From the interviews with traders in the market has emerged a clear positive inclination towards the new wave of gentrification that is characterizing the neighborhood and which is visible even to a careless eye. Their hope is that the new residents of the neighborhood, attracted by the aura of the multiethnic market, relying on it for their daily needs. In fact at first glance, the target population that uses the market is quite diverse in terms of purchasing power and geographical origin. Strong competition with other markets and with large retail chains, however, has given rise to a series of illegal practices that characterized the various markets throughout Amsterdam and in particular the Dappermarkt on horseback between 2012 and 2013, and it was dramatically publicized in newspapers locals as “the market corruption scandal”.

### **Insurgent practices in Dappermarkt**

Picking up the thread of the discussion on insurgents practices and their role of warning lights of an existing discomfort or likewise as an answer to a need unheeded, we tried to analyze the case of corruption have occurred to Dappermarkt as an illegal and informal response to the need to obtain a higher trading income. Between 2012 and 2013 they have been discovered numerous cases of corruption in open-air markets of Amsterdam, with no distinction between the city center and the suburbs. The practice was almost identical in each market and provided for the payment of sums of money to the market managers in exchange for obtaining a better, more visible spot in the market. There existed a real hierarchy of positions corresponding to a price list which increased as a function of the visibility and comfort of the space occupied. The Dappermarkt, which stretches for about 600 meters vertically in relation to the two main roads, this system provided for an increase of the price for spaces in correspondence of the edges of roads and in the middle of the market space, currently occupied by one of the few banks held from Dutch traders. It is clear that this explicit a mechanism of internal power relations in the market and particularly among traders and market managers. The allocation of the spots in the market, for those traders who do not have a fixed place, is a daily ritual that puts in place the authority of the market manager as defined as “manager of the last chance” (Janssen, 2014). During the last restructuring of the management of Amsterdam markets in 2010, the three Dappermarkt market managers have been “forgotten” by the town hall for several months, before being contacted. This behavior has been experienced in terms of abandonment, lack of respect and recognition for their daily work. In turn, the market managers are subjected to the general directors, which in the case of the Dappermarkt is the director of the East District. These managers play this role for a short time, no binding territorially to the markets on which they should be vigilant and not building relationships of trust with the various market managers. The latter, therefore, have to play a much more important role than that they should be recognized by the law and the abuse of power is therefore around the corner.

One can therefore conclude that these corruption practices show a lack of attention of the municipal government to some of the needs expressed by the protagonists of the market place scene? Following the definition of Holston these practices can definitely be labeled as insurgents, but a different appearance than those observed at the Nuovo Mercato Esquilino. In this case the emphasis is on the internal micro-power relationship in the market and around it, taking hostage the space as the body of the crime and at the same time as the bone of contention. The space is used depending on the type of power that is exercised and assumes more and more importance in a context of a full expansion

as that of the Dapperbuurt district. The evidence that emerges from this analysis of the different practices arising in the two markets in Rome and Amsterdam, suggests that although the starting points can differ, the question of visibility and the potential of space as a tool for the inclusion of both the old and the new resident population, are factors necessary to consider in dealing with the changes of a neighborhood, regardless of the type of action that caused them.

## CONCLUSIONS

These two cases highlight some crucial issues that can represent the starting point for a concrete reflection on the possibility that the non-conditional visibility could give to such spaces. Urban planning rules are conflicting with the multicultural nature of some areas in the contemporary city and planners “lack legitimate authority and policy backing” (Zhuang, 2013) to face the issues related to cultural differences. It is worth saying that one of the major feature of urban planning is the promotion of people’s integration in the city through an egalitarian approach founded on a property-centered point of view that is not more suitable for contemporary urban societies. But as in Mohammed Qadeer words “Multiculturalism requires that planning instruments be both sensitive to and responsive to the social needs of particular communities and therefore calls all the more people-centered approaches.” In fact here even the unitary conception of public interest is under examination. It is not more a utopic thought to say that there are a multiplicity of public interests that should affect the making of policies for the construction and management of urban spaces. There is also another question related to both residential patterns and the construction of social spaces. The latter is probably the most interesting aspect as it deals with at least three foremost concerns of planning theory: the spatial justice, the right to the city and the power of space. The relation between the physicality and territoriality of the city, the resources settled in some space, and the population who inhabit these space generates the demand for a more just redistribution of these potentialities among the citizens. Thus the right to the city as a concept and as a request has almost spread everywhere and it takes the shape of renewed forms of urban movements demanding for participation in the planning process. Therefore the major question remains: how to deal with cultural differences in this particular multicultural market space avoiding discrimination in one sense or another? To this regard, the non-conditional visibility represents a possible response that requires enough bravery (and cultural skills) to be put in place. In the case of Nuovo Mercato Esquilino it could be framed as follows:

- the opening of a child-care service for market workers and the neighborhood’s deprived families. It could be placed inside the market in a separate place;
- the promotion of a market’s permanent committee of market traders, foreign and national traders from inside and outside the market and officers from the planning and the economic departments in order to enhance the touristic role of the area through the disposition of several visual devices featuring the multicultural nature of the area;
- an increased visibility of the neighborhood through the expression of its several souls with festivals, exhibitions and cultural events open to everybody in the city. These could be included into the city tours and the city guides.

In the case of the Dappermarkt, we can argue that the priority lies on the need to clarify to which extent the gentrification is leaded. To include the market in the process could be a first step to make the traders accountable for their behavior involving them in the

decision-making process for the further change in the neighborhood. Together with the shop owners in the area, they could be the target and the agents of the gentrification project if it doesn't have the aim to expulse them from the area. A positive definition of the neighborhood as a multicultural one, fostering this feature through its physical visualization with the use of different colors for the houses, exposition of national flags, gourmet festival for the discovering of exotic food and traditions, could be significant signs of the application of a non-conditional visibility for the Dappermarkt area.

Critics could argue that an application of the non-conditional visibility may produce a sense of loss of identity for the national people living in the area. In fact this is not an issue. First of all national people resident in the area (both in the Esquilino district and in the Dapperbuurt) are interested by the multicultural wave since at least the 2000 so they are, in a sense, accustomed to it. They are aware of the multiple identities of the area and even if they may not accept them at least they tolerate them, in a way or another, if they still want to live in there. Besides the non-conditional visibility means that there will be multiple point of reference so even the Italian population and the Dutch one will be able to display their cultural features through, for example, a more peculiar way of advertise the restaurants and the bars, caring much more about the exterior of the shops and of course through the national festivals and particular holidays. Last but not least undoubtedly each part of the city has a stronger presence of at most two foreign cultures at once and the public spaces are place naturally made for the encounter with the others to which even the national population in the district is already accustomed to. Finally, it should be clear to the planners that nowadays their work could not be socially value free as they perceive it. They are not more mere practitioners dealing with technical issues in the city, indeed they need to know that they act as political agents of change in some way. The solution released for the public and the commercial spaces in the city do really contribute to the social integration of the different communities living in that city.

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# FANTASY ABUSING REALITY ARCHITECTURAL SPACES AND THE PRODUCTION OF FEAR: A FEMINIST APPROACH

**RANA DUBEISSY**

Lebanese University Beirut Lebanon. E: ranadbc@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Masculine dominance in society is omnipotent and inherent at the same time. It is reflected in culture in general, and in architecture and urban planning in particular. In career performance codes and the spaces produced and their organization. Architecture goes beyond geometry and structures and becomes alive just as human bodies, males, and females, roam its spaces and intrigue desires and feelings. Architecture transforms into a stage for cultural processes, and modes of social relations.

The privilege that the masculine has, develops the politics which determines the patriarchal usage of the space. Knowing that space itself is an instrument transformed into a power tool dominating the feminine. The masculine frames space as a representation of social hierarchy asserts stereotypes on gender roles, and polarities.

The dominance of the masculine body representation and male experience in architecture has generated fear and intimidation for the feminine, especially in public spaces, which possibly explains women exclusion from public spaces and consequently from public life. This gendering of public space, demarcation of women, the architectural containment of space, raises the question of the patriarchy of framing human movement and activities and gendered spaces.

This paper explores the development of architecture and urban planning and how this development was patriarchally orchestrated. It explores the cultural ripples of the male domination and its effect on architecture.

Moreover, it argues that the continuous discrimination between gender roles and assertion on female subversion will lead to further exclusion of women from public space.

## KEYWORDS

Architecture, gender, habitus

## INTRODUCTION

The code of masculine dominance seems to be the main component in society. The lineage of patriarchal ideology echoes in cultural outcomes in general, and in architecture and urban design in particular. Architecture takes shape through combining Euclidean spaces next to each other in a certain geometric relation. Only when these spaces accommodate habitation, and existential meanings are inserted, then architecture becomes alive. Therefore, architecture cannot exist neutral nor purely geometric; it presents a plateau where lived life, culture, gender dynamics and sexual desires are continuously enacted.

Architectural space is an amalgamation of the mind and the body, the thoughts and the actions, it empowers the politics between genders. It is important to note that space itself does not have power, it is the usage of the space that renders it powerful. The historical patriarchal framing of spaces offers privilege to the masculine in different cases: gender roles and their stereotypes, social order, polarity, and hierarchy. The marginalization of the female body and its spatial experience transforms the space into a place of degradation and exploitation. This act of masculine dominance of space sustains the process by which the patriarchal power frames human bodily activities and gendered relations.

Moreover, it is usually presumed that architectural spaces and buildings are “neutral” and they do not affect interactions within. This notion needs further exploration since architectural is practiced under an umbrella of power relations supporting social values, which are typically performing to the favor of the hegemonic power. Architecture orchestrates building spaces as instruments for representation, therefore these buildings are political and ideological.

Architecture is a mechanism of representation loaded with meanings and values which help us define our sense of self and our constructed cultural identity. Architecture has successfully been veiling gendered intentions, as it embodies universal values and ideologies of equality and gender-free.

To explore the gender politics and the inherent sexual desires in the architectural realm is to investigate how the symbolic representation of the human body operates as an instrument to generate sexual identity. Moreover, to analyze spatial articulation and organization in this manner, how can architecture construct gendered spaces? How can a space designed as feminine differ from another designed as masculine? How is architecture feeding into the patriarchal system through supporting gender relations?

## THE STORY OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE BODY

In the process of designing buildings and cities, a metaphor of the human body seems to be a powerful tool, which transfers human qualities into buildings. A general view of architectural design through history shows that the male body was favored initiation concept in the process of architecture and buildings.

Howard Roark, the architect hero of *The Fountainhead* objectivist novel, by Ayn Rand, represents the ideal man. She describes him at the beginning of the novel as the architect standing naked at the edge of a granite cliff. Rand's protagonist was the young male architect exploring the masculine cultural beliefs the designers deploy in their buildings and structures, representing masculinity. As Rand described him, Roark's body itself was “long, straight lines and angles, each curve broken into planes” (Rand 15), echoes a

description of a Modernist building. Ayn Rand's representation of the ideal man through an architect shows the use of architectural language for the construction of masculinity. In her novel, she presented Roark as the creator of an architectural cult, and she used buildings metaphors on him presenting man-worship. Howard Roark through the novel defended the core principles of modernism and inflicted masculine values over buildings, like integrity, just like men. The Fountainhead is an example of the cultural and social use of architectural metaphors to initiate, and maintain beliefs about gender.

Phallocentrism, where the male is the main subject of interest, is the norm in a patriarchal society. Formal codes and regulations, architectural boards and associations, city planners and theorists are deployed to strengthen this power relations system. Moreover, anthropomorphism, male body imagery, is clearly visible in the built architecture. From the phallic skyscrapers to the pumped up civic architecture showing the powerful systems and administrations operating and constructing them, the symbol of the male-dominated society, where the male power is spread over the city and its architecture. Daniel Burnham, the planner of Manila and Chicago, says: "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir man's blood," (quoted in Charles Moore 7 ), reveals the masculine endeavor for bigness and power.

Architects have tried to humanize the "architectural body" to ensure the transference of natural beauty to architecture. Analogy linking bodies and buildings together are present in our descriptive architectural vocabulary: skeleton, face, skin, backbone, legs, fingers... If we probe further into the Renaissance text n architecture, which is based on the Vitruvian text, we find that the male body is praised, and it dominates the architectural morphology. In the Ten Books of Architecture, Vitruvius sets the human body as an example for design, citing its form and mathematical symmetry. He says: "Without symmetry and proportion there can be no principles in any design of the temple; that is, if there is no precise relation between its members, as in the case of a well-shaped man". (165) Vitruvius sets the man to be the highest and most perfect creation, and his body represents the perfect harmony, therefore architects should design temples in the image of the man's body. Vitruvius sets clearly the body-architecture equation, where he regards the architectural coding as phallocentric since he stated that the paradigm for a structure would be a well proportioned male body. The effect that Western architecture has is pervasive; it is the widely taught and practiced method of architecture. It is based on the Vitruvian text and the Renaissance principles. Starting from the writings of Alberti and di Georgio Martini, through the modern movement and the Modulor of Le Corbusier who regarded a six-foot white man as the module for architectural design, the western architecture excluded the female body in the symbolic appropriation of the space.

An exploration of the traditional cultures, on the other hand, can clearly find certain architectural elements that are gender associated and derived from a geometrically and symbolically crucial spatial organization. Elements that are vertical are associated with the divine, the masculine, while horizontal elements are associated with the earth and the feminine. Another spatial reference is the curve (female) and the straight line (male). For instance, if we probe into the curvilinear spaces of Southeast Asia, we find associations with the feminine, and elements associated with the womb, breast ... The granaries or store houses take the shape of the breast, and the womb-like windowless room of the Ifugao house with its slanting walls nearly spherical. The nineteenth-century house (bahay na bato) was feminine with a structure described as "a house with wooden legs and a skirt" (Perez et al.:24).

On the other hand, in Western Europe, there were no curvilinear spaces, even domes were based on straight lines. The womb and the breasts were overshadowed by a masculine non-curvilinear patriarchal culture.

## THE STRUCTURE AND THE ORNAMENT

In architecture, masculinity is further defined alongside with manliness as the “genuine” and womanliness as the “artificial”. Vitruvius says: “In the invention of two types of columns, they borrowed the manly beauty, naked and unadorned for the one, and for the other the delicacy, adornment and proportions characteristics of women” (72). The column as analogous to man is strong and solid, a Doric column for example which has diameter one-sixth of its length. While we can say a Corinthian column which is slender, fragile, with diameter one-eighth of its height and crowned with a decorative capital to be feminine, the delicate ornament, which dresses up a building and channels the eye from the inner order, was associated with the feminine and considered a threat in architecture. Alberti wrote:

*... colored and lewdly dressed with allurements of painting  
... striving to attract and seduce the eye of the beholder,  
and to divert his attention from a proper examination of the parts to be  
considered... (Alberti, Book IV 34)*

Modernists also did not save the ornament from the attack, “ornament is crime” they claimed. Buildings were praised to reveal their construction, material, form, and function; their inner truths. Ornament for modernists was masking reality, and can be linked to women as a pleasant addition to a building.

Le Corbusier, a pillar in the modern movement in architecture, in his endeavor for the authentic and rational architecture, found the archetypal model in a six-foot tall white man, nude and unadorned, over the artificial female covered with makeup and colored fashion. Le Corbusier’s Modulor is based on the nude male physique, and it was the anthropometric scale which he used to control proportions and dimensions. Le Corbusier also applied what he called Law of Ripolin, which is this coat of white paint to cover the walls of his modernist buildings, which can be associated with the masculine character of hygiene, logic, and truth.

A building’s architectural integrity is directly linked to its masculinisation of its materials and the manly attributes it holds, such as austerity, authenticity, and permanence. Therefore, building materials play a major part in the process of gendering architecture. Wood panels are usually used for interiors of recreational and professional spaces like corporate board rooms, law courts, bars, which are the rough masculine codes. The hard and cold masculine codes are reflected in the glass, steel, and stone. The use of any applied ornament to create a masculine environment is reduced to the use of the inherent qualities and barest essential, abiding by the rule: less is more masculine.

## GENDER POSITIONS AND INTERACTION IN SPACE

Sexual identity is one of the critical issues, and many theories have been probing into it trying to define it. Pierre Bourdieu is an anthropologist whose work was focused primarily on the dynamics of power in society. He suggests that sexual identity is the compulsory repetition of culturally prescribed codes, which Bourdieu calls habitus,

what people feel or think becomes automatic and in accord to a set of social practices. Without any questioning people abide and adopt these gendered activities. The habitus is not random; it operates according to a coherent logic which Bourdieu calls “logic of practice” (Structures, Habitus, and Practices 53).

Habitus as “structuring structures” according to Bourdieu, suggests architecture as the embodied space as it functions as a “principal locus for the objectification of generative scheme...” (outline of a Theory of Practice 72). Through polarization, such scheme can establish sexual identities based on habitus of gender. Therefore, habitus is a gender fact, “a logic derived from a common set of conditions of existence, to regulate the practice of a set of individuals in common response to those conditions” (Outline of a Theory of Practice 81). Architecture defines the habitus of gender by allocating bodies in specific locations in the space and by dividing the space between the males and the females. The architectural spaces bring together cultural gender differences through monitored flow of humans within the space. Also, architecture creates and maintains existing social hierarchies and differences by erecting walls of various heights dividing spaces.

Bourdieu studied the Kabyle house in Algeria where he investigated again the dialogic relation between the body and space. When a human body initiates a movement or displacement in space, space structures this bodily movement. Therefore, activities and actions performed within an architectural space are structural exercises. Moreover, architecture with all its elements: walls, surfaces, enclosures, engulf all bodily experiences. The dichotomous spatial demarcation between the male and the female space is reinforced and reproduced by the habitus of gender which is inscribed in the space itself.

*The opposition between the centrifugal male orientation and the centripetal female orientation ... is the true principle of organization of the domestic space, is doubtless also the relationship of each sex to its “psyche”, that is, to their bodies and more precisely to their sexuality. (“Structures, Habitus, Practices” 92)*

The demarcation of male and female bodies and their assignment to the public and domestic spaces has a long history. This dichotomy is still valid in modern cities where men are assigned to office spaces, while women are assigned to domestic spaces. Here it is important to note the historic division of labor within the patriarchal capitalist system, which reiterates the dichotomy between production and reproduction, professional and domestic. Therefore, in the hierarchical organization of cities, gender relations are socially prescribed, where the man rules the public sphere and the woman is assigned to the house.

The domestic realm in the world is where the female body resides. Women are to be the furthest possible from the public space, in the deepest part of the house, passing a sequence of spaces, protected from any predator male gaze. This masculine authority and female surveillance system renders the house to be a space for female domestication. The woman is bound to be positioned at the end of a series of spaces: bedrooms or kitchen. Therefore, inside the house, spaces are gendered and divided between male and female according to comfort and location.

Boundaries between sexual binaries, male and female, are based on spatial separation and division. This yields gender-polarised spaces, where men rule the outside world and women are inside. Men the culturally dominant, assert the notion that they are the ones who should construct and build, while women decorate and ornament. Men defend these roles because they believe that it is biologically determined.



Women have wombs; they are capable of providing protection, and men have penises, so they aspire prominence and projection. Men build skyscrapers, straight streets and they violate landscape. Their buildings project the manly characteristics of being cold and oppressive. In the mean time, women are enclosed and confined in domesticity, providing warmth and comfort for the interior.

Feminists argue that the binary relation between protection and projection is not biological, it is a result of the oppressive phallogentric culture for thousands of years. Feminist critics argue that both men and women are trying to survive in the world of men, the world of projection. There are two worlds around us: a world of abstraction and artificiality, the male world, and a world of protection, sensuality, and spontaneity, the female world.

Traditionally, psychoanalysts have suggested and theorized that the division of the sexes begins inside the womb. The women shelter and protect the babies in a warm, secure interior inside their bodies. Women try to recreate this warm interior for their families. Also, psychoanalyst Eric Erikson says that binary differences are related to the shapes of the sexual organs: "in the male, external organs, erectable and intrusive in character, conducting highly mobile sperm cells; internal organs in the female, with a vestibular access leading to a statically expectant ova." (106)

According to psychoanalysis, particularly to the Freudian theory on penis envy, the male does not have a womb, and therefore he lacks that warm shelter inside his body, he cannot provide protection nor nurturing. Instead, he has a penis which he extends for ejaculation and urination. The women (according to Freud) have a wound, a void that they want to fill...

Pierre Bourdieu declined the Freudian theory and the psychoanalytical approach, which is preoccupied with the geography of the body instead of the mind:

*Psychoanalysis, the disenchanting product of disenchantment of the world, which leads to a domain of signification that is mythically overdetermined to be constituted as such, forgets and causes it to be forgotten that one's body and other peoples body are only ever perceived through categories of perception which would be naive to treat as sexual ... moreover, the interpretation they give ... always relate back, sometimes concretely, to the opposition between biologically defined properties of two sexes. ("Structures, Habitus, and Practices" 92)*

## SPACES OF FEAR

Buildings and architectural spaces act as a platform for the individuality to be practiced. Bodies, among other objects in space, come within a specific scheme serving the general layout. This scheme guarantees the dynamics of pleasure quenched by the gaze. Some building types specifically program function with spatial configuration grounded on an ideology for social interaction. Like libraries, malls, schools, offices, etc... through the design scheme the building can control the movement of bodies as well as constraint, exclude or even emancipate.

The scheme that guarantees the gaze within a spatial structure empowers gender dynamics. Usually, men are privileged with panoptic visual power over less fortunate objects, usually women. Like public pizzas for example or urban streets which are not safe for a woman, these places are a theatre for the masculine power to perform itself. While streets are characterized by the tension and dynamism between spectatorship and exhibitionism, female bodies are on the show; they are threatened by evil stares

which gradually banish female bodies from the streets. Therefore, females are in a state of fear when they are in public places, fear of sexual violence initiated by men. Females are more susceptible to sexual violence, which leads to excluding them from public places especially at night.

## CONCLUSION

Architecture has been male dominated, where the female body has been excluded, suppressed and oppressed. The female needs to be re-represented through a structural framework, her body re-explored, re-functioned, transformed and contested. Starting from architecture education all the way to practice, the female needs strategies to empower her participation against the asymmetry of the masculine framework.

In architectural design, women need to participate and set her anthropometric scales and dimension to govern spaces. Stereotypical gender concepts claim that women's needs are same and never changing, which results in buildings that trap women inside them for tasks assigned to them. Architectural design needs to acknowledge the specific physiology of women, and their psycho-social experience to maximize their potentials and avoid their isolation and exclusion.

The history of architecture and urban design professions do not mention any woman architect or planner in its course. It is time to shift the category of analysis to rewrite the history of planning and architecture. Gender inequality is not a simple numeric issue of male dominance in the profession of architecture and urban planning. It is the male theories and standards, and ideologies that need to be re-investigated and challenged. We need architecture and urban planning profession that is gender sensitive, where women designers do not have to give up their feminizing tendency in favor of a masculine architectural arena.

It is critical to know that an overview is possible. Architects should create an environment of men and women, and for men and women and for those whose gender we cannot and should not define. The target is gender-sensitive spaces, an architecture free from stereotypes of gender. Only by doing so, architecture can be an agent for social change and a plateau for emancipation.

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# TRACK 6

## **T6** RESILIENT STREETS: METABOLISM, CATAclysm, AND BEYOND

Track chair | **Dr. SOCRATES STRATIS**

Cyprus University

Co-chair | **Dr. AHMAD TAKI**

de Montfort University

### **DESCRIPTION**

The aim of this track is to bring up an inter-disciplinary discussion on the need for resiliency of the commons during post-traumatic reconstruction processes confronting man-made or natural disasters. How practices such as architecture, planning and visual arts, hand in hand with humanitarian practices, give power to the civil society, and how they reclaim politics in confronting on the one hand *laissez-faire* enclaving urban developments based on clean slate approaches with neoliberal priorities, (Easterling, 2007). Clean slate approaches imply a freedom from constraints like program, context, regulation, and politics (Cuff, 2011, p. 77). On the other hand, to offer alternatives to inadaptably large scale homogeneous master plans imposed by third parties in the name of “renewal” projects exploiting post-catastrophic opportunities, unable however, to cope with a prevailing context of uncertainty, (Stratis, 2014).

Quite often, such reconstruction processes that take place after war or natural disasters operate in a state of exception, profiting from the inability of the local institutions to cope with the extraordinary conditions of such endeavor. The difficulty of the local institutions lies on their inertia against rapid adaptation to a post-traumatic era, as well as on the overwhelming scale of reconstruction. How could the characteristics of resilient systems such as diversity, redundancy, network connectivity, modularity and adaptability could be translated into the resilience of the Commons, with the street at the foreground?

### **KEYWORDS**

Disaster, post-traumatic reconstruction, resilience, street, commons, design as politics.

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# DECOLONIAL DESIGN-WAYFINDING FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY OF BRISBANE AND GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

**TRISTAN SCHULTZ**

Griffith University Australia. **E:** t.schultz@griffith.edu.au

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines and provides a Decolonial Wayfinding frame focused on case studies of two cities—Brisbane and the Gold Coast, Australia. Climate displaced peoples will arrive in both these cities in the coming decades and both will be affected by sea level rises and other future challenges. City streets will have to dramatically change, new knowledge will need to be produced to survive. Actions will require being geared toward both pragmatic transformations and radical semiotic transformations occurring through visual communication interventions prefiguring the events they anticipate by many decades, shifting public perceptions of what the future will bring and contributing to the crucial psychological adaptation that enormous numbers of people will have to undergo as citizens transition toward resilient and adaptable cities.

Public policy guiding documents of Brisbane and the Gold Coast, representative of other Western neo-liberal colonised geographies around the world, are interrogated here, with an aim to identify a decolonial preparedness for instability and disaster events in these cities and how they might redirect their symbolic value as images of prepared cities, resilient cities, adaptable cities. It is argued that wayfinding discourse broadly, and particularly in the guiding documents of these cities, needs to expand significantly to incorporate a comprehension of decolonial wayfinding. Three framing layers are offered as a place to begin. They are: Critical Mapping; World-Picture; and Movement. Then these are placed in relation to Decolonial Wayfinding.

## KEYWORDS

Decolonial Design; Wayfinding; Sustainable Futures

## INTRODUCTION

At a time when the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report (2016) places failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation as the world's number one risk in terms of impact, there are varying prefigurative design actions being taken in cities across the world to retreat, avoid and defend against disaster. Some cities will prepare to perish, others will engineer defences and some, as design philosopher Tony Fry suggests, might search for ontological shifts to become resilient in this future unsettled world (2015). With the latter as a central focus, this paper explores how designers might use wayfinding to ontologically shift public perceptions of what the future will bring, contributing to crucial psychological adaptation that enormous numbers of people will have to undergo as citizens transition toward resilient and adaptable cities. Brisbane and the Gold Coast—two cities in South East Queensland Australia—are interesting cases to ask these questions via as they are representative of many other Western neoliberal colonised geographies worldwide. If one agrees that modernity, colonialism and globalisation underpin much of the structural unsustainability reaching our city streets then there is an imperative to interrogate wayfinding with a decolonial lens, as has begun here.

Aspirations outlined by these city's planning documents, at first glance, speak to an imperative of broadly grappling with transitioning to more sustainable futures. The Brisbane City Centre Master Plan 2014 has aspirations to be a "more resilient city – a city that is safe, confident and prepared for natural disasters" (Brisbane City Council, 2014, 29). The Gold Coast Rapid Transport: Repositioning the City document has a key goal of being a "sustainable and resilient city, capable of addressing the complex environmental challenges of the future" (City of Gold Coast, 2011, 269). These documents outline action points for traditional conceptions of wayfinding; signs such as stronger navigation around precincts and campuses, better navigational networks around roads, open space and built environments, and building signage that helps people seek refuge in case of disaster events. Less evident is where these action points draw relationships with numerous other concerns present and arriving on city streets, such as: cultural commodification and homogenization evidenced in politics of gentrification, multiple contentious cultural histories and consumer driven digital interfaces colonizing our attention; severe climatic conditions appearing as heat islanding and rapid sea level rise; or rapid unpredictable demographic changes such as climate migrants seeking refuge. Yet it is these documents, along with their deficiencies, that are to inform upcoming master wayfinding strategies Brisbane and the Gold Coast are due to release in the coming year, which will guide wayfinding implementation well into the 2020s. By then, evidence of the abovementioned concerns will saturate our everyday experience. To sufficiently and proactively deal with these future challenges, it is argued that wayfinding discourse broadly, and particularly in these cities guiding documents, needs to expand significantly to incorporate a comprehension of decolonial wayfinding. This paper offers a theoretical framing of three layers that decolonial wayfinding might incorporate to this end. They are: Critical Mapping; World-Picture; and Movement. These are placed in relation to Decolonial Wayfinding. With this framing, a critical discourse analysis of current planning documents from Brisbane and the Gold Coast is summarised. Finally, two case studies of decolonial wayfinding based on early research in these cities are introduced for discussion.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Defining Decolonial Wayfinding

The last 500 years have left all cultures, lifeworlds and the entire planet in all its 'worlds' entangled in power differential spaces between modernity/coloniality (Mignolo, 2009). Praxis is emerging most notably through Redirective Practice and Transition Design (Fry, 2009; Tonkinwise, 2015; Escobar, 2015) making reference to reaccenting these spaces through the relationship between ontological design and decoloniality. Similarly, in relation to sound design Pedro Oliveira et al., (2016) articulate their perspectives of decolonial design. Designers such as the founders of the 'Decolonising Design' (2016) platform including this paper's author (Schultz, 2016) are exploring not only the ontological agency of the everyday world in which colonised individuals, communities and cultures exist, but also the sociocultural, sociotechnical and geopolitical future challenges arriving. Broadly, decolonial design follows a political objective of three streams: a) unlearning: critical unravelling and exposing of Eurocentrism, b) learning: directing thinking-in-action toward identifying what can be learnt from different modes of being-in-the-world, c) praxis: redirecting away from the hubris of European Modernity towards amplifying pluriversal worlds, while not ignoring the inescapable entanglements amongst modernity/coloniality (Escobar, 2008; Mignolo, 2011). Cameron Tonkinwise (2015) suggests, following Ezio Manzini, that geographies must be designed to be hospitable to foreigners and not just to those fit for the local ecologies. They must perpetuate the project of diversification in order to be open to divergent diversity and migratory difference", a kind of 'cosmopolitan localism' (Sachs, 1999; Manzini, 2009; Tonkinwise, 2015; Mignolo, 2009). Together with Metrofitting, discussed below, of making proactive adaptive measures visible and to prefigure the events they anticipate by many decades (Fry, 2014), a vital moment has arrived for a discourse of decolonial wayfinding to take shape.

### Defining concerns arriving on city streets

In Brisbane and the Gold Coast the imperative for this vital message is clearly indicated by a host of evidence. The region where both these cities lie, has experienced one of the fastest population growth rates in Australia (Byrne et al., 2012) and has been singled out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as one of the most vulnerable Australasian regions owing to its geography and settlement patterns (Reisinger ed., et al., 2014, 1377). Queensland's population is predicted to grow from 4 million to 8 million by 2044 (Queensland Government, 2014). Compounding unsettlement, climate displaced people from around the world as well as inside Queensland and Australia are also moving to the area. Australian Government mapping forecasts sea level rises by 2100 of a low scenario of 50cm and a high scenario 110cm, dramatically affecting Australia's densely populated coastal urban sprawls, notably the Gold Coast. These rises will affect the Brisbane River too which runs directly through its city centre (Australian Government, 2015). Climate shifts will dramatically shift geographic distribution of vector borne diseases (Steffen et al., 2012), while human movement will rapidly increase potential transmission of communicable diseases (Steffen et al., 2012). All of this will undermine our current sense of psychological and geographical stability. Service design and provisions will have to change dramatically to accommodate a resilience to all this. In short, new knowledge will need to be produced to survive, and wayfinding will need to play a crucial role in this.

## Current Disaster Management Wayfinding

There are some examples of wayfinding for disaster management and inclusive wayfinding addressing above concerns. They include safety information (such as evacuation directional signage) in case of, during or in the wake of emergency situations, in a range of accessible formats, modes and technologies that are appropriate to the diverse communication needs of people, including those with disabilities. For example, in the U.S.A, FEMA teamed up with leading global design studio, Frog Design to create a toolkit that contains recommendations and materials for wayfinding along with information flow management structures after disasters to guide communities through recovery processes (Frog Design, 2013). This is a notable initiative but a reactive design project. Worldwide there are proactive strategies for wayfinding in the event of disaster too, such as the Up and Out: Oregon Tsunami Evacuation Wayfinding Project (Hajo et al., 2014). However, in cases like these the focus remains on literal and practical signage approaches of helping people get out of the way. In 2012 Hurricane Sandy forced New Jersey residents to form a collective initiating guerrilla Occupy Sandy Wayfinding, “in the absence of proper city or state support this crisis-wayfinding project installs temporary signs to help all residents know about relief centers” (Occupy Sandy Wayfinding, 2013). There is much to learn from their initiative in relation to what kind of state support might also prefiguratively do this hard work, rather than the affected residents. Moreover, questions are raised about the effectiveness of disaster wayfinding. A recent study on Melbourne train stations found that the majority of 1127 passengers surveyed were not aware of the stations emergency evacuation way finding tools. The authors cited the role-rule model that “states that how a specific person responds to a threat (e.g., fire) will depend highly on the role of the person (e.g., if he or she is a staff member or a passenger)” (Shiwakoti, N., et al., 2015). Passengers were being both compliant to delegate orders and complacent to their responsibility to take charge of their awareness and perceptions of evacuation cues. In these cases, as with the guidance in the documents analysed below, Universal Design philosophy is continuously present as best practice for wayfinding disaster management. Universal Design advocated by one document, is for everyone, to the greatest extent possible and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products and services without the need for specialized or adapted features (Brisbane City Council, 2012). Yet Universal Design has been criticized as perpetuating an image that disabilities and their limitless variations can be reduced to a universal generalization, resulting in differences concealed (Erkiliç, 2011). Moreover, the fields’ rigid opposition to specialised or adaptive design formations prohibits bricolage, repair and localised solutions and so conspicuously appears to align with western epistemological economic rationalism. Although these cases display admirable prefigurative design actions, they are minimal and non-relational, falling short of complex future-thinking service provisions needed to address the kind of future challenges discussed above.

## THEORETICAL FRAMING

### Towards Decolonial Wayfinding: Three Layers

Drawn from hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy, critical cultural theory, decolonial studies, critical design and technology studies a theoretical framing of three layers that decolonial wayfinding might incorporate will now be discussed. They are: Critical Mapping; World-Picture; and Movement. Then these are placed in relation to Decolonial Wayfinding.

## Critical Mapping

Frederic Jameson (1990) argued that ‘we’, that is the West, lack the cognitive mapping skills to make our own world intelligible to ourselves through a situational understanding of our own position in it. With a mind-set of western epistemological rationalism, exploring how to ‘see’ knowledge production by drawing ‘things’ together, navigating paths through future challenges is particularly unfamiliar. Though with a designer’s ability to process lateral thinking, Bruno Latour has called the discipline to a challenge:

*“design practice has done a marvellous job of inventing the practical skills for drawing objects...But what has always been missing from those marvellous drawings (designs in the literal sense) are an impression of the controversies and the many contradicting stake holders that are born within with these...where are the visualization tools that allow the contradictory and controversial nature of matters of concern to be represented?” (2008, 12-13).*

In the planning process of mapping for wayfinding insights, drawing things together takes the form of site circulation analysis. Four commonly cited criteria in this analysis are: architectural clues, graphic communication cues, audible communication cues, tactile communication cues (Muhlhausen, 2000; Apelt, 2007). These mapping typologies tend to be shackled to classifications common in urban planners’ rationalistic perspectives such as the approach taken in the canonized book by Kevin Lynch (1960) *The Image of the City*. In contrast, Denis Wood (2010) argues, contemporary critical psychogeographic mapping, less articulated in wayfinding mapping guidelines, tends towards a messier hermeneutic approach. He notes this approach has roots in the mid 20th century Situationists movement of deriving Paris city streets (Debord, 1955). Actors were free to think about city navigation problems outside the rationalist planning profession. Dealing with the complexity of 21st century City Streets requires rigorous mapping and planning action from both the traditionally disparate practices of the Situationists mapping methods and of planners and geographers (Wood, 2010).

Additionally, a trace concerning the role that modernity and colonialism have played in both destroying Indigenous mapping methods and instilling decolonial methods would be considered in decolonial wayfinding. For example, Inuit people continue a practice of carving portable maps out of driftwood for navigating coastal waters (Decolonial Atlas, 2016). Polynesians and Pacific Islanders mastered navigating without any instruments thousands of years ago to explore the widespread islands of the Pacific (Lin, 2014). Chad Kalepa Baybayan describes wayfinding as a “natural orientation process that uses surrounding environmental clues – sun, moon, stars, waves, and animals – to help set direction” (Lin, 2014). In Australian Aboriginal culture mapping is imbued with symbolic significance and relational pattern thinking that binds custodians to reciprocal relationships with environments and lifeworlds (Sheehan, 2011). Maps are always a reductive selection of what one decides to include in and leave out, therefore bound in wielding power. This ongoing perpetuation of homogenizing cartographic methods such as the world’s faith in the mono-typology of Google maps perpetuates the destruction of other ways of mapping therefore forcing different cultures into a universal reading and reducing options of how to navigate future challenges.

## World-Picture

From the rationalistic mapping out of Le Corbusier’s gigantic boulevards searching for a totality view, to examples in Brisbane and Gold Coast in digital interface orientation maps, where one can zoom in like De Certeau’s gazing atop the Empire State Building



from the high skies while missing the detail down below, the world as picture, Martin Heidegger (1977) argues, is our modern condition. This kind of 'enframing', in the way Heidegger describes it, is a harking back to our Enlightenment rational ideals of controlling technology with an appetite for the quantitative, that is, the countless counting and categorizing of things, and this categorizing never stops. Heidegger's 'gigantic' theory, in planning and calculating and adjusting and making secure, is gigantic because cities can seemingly always be calculated completely, encapsulated, yet at the same time always have quantitative potential to 'go bigger'. Turning the world into picture is seen at every interactive wayfinding orientation kiosk promising dreams of a zooming in of the totality of the city while the reality of situated experience of being-in-the-world, outside the bounds of the screen go passing by unnoticed. For Paul Virilio (1991) 'the world as picture' reaches new heights as the crisis of the conceptualization of dimensions of reality, where all that remains is a hyperreality. In Virilio's hyperreality speed and time are according to technological advancement that both controls and takes over a stable physicality of geometrical narratives of reality. He argues we have lost touch with 'authentic' perception; we experience the world increasingly through simulated perceptions. This crisis can be seen played out in the dominant discourse in wayfinding for disaster management and resilience, where the technological advancements of interactive digital immersive wayfinding are unquestioningly celebrated. Naming the 21st city the digital city, the smart city, signifies an unquestioned technological directionality as if looking from above and outside into the world is evolution, rather than for what it is—an intellectual acquisition of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, in the spectacle that is digitally immersive and interactive advertising reaching city streets as the new frontier of capitalist agendas, our attention is colonized and farmed as a resource for private commercial interests (Stiegler, 2012; Bauman, 2013; Crawford, 2015). This same capitalist attention grabbing technique is now permeating digitally immersive wayfinding too, competing for our attention from the primary task at hand—finding our way, which in extreme cases of disaster surely deserves complete attention. Consequently, to create a world within the world, to place a screen of reality between humans and the biophysical world, in wayfinding, is inseparable from the creation of a simulated perceptual experience at distance from the physicality of geometrical narratives of reality. Once in place, the screen enables sociotechnical systems to grab our attention, degrading a citizen's ability to both read signs to seek refuge, and to psychologically become resilient to future events. A decolonial wayfinding would be watchful of the seductive interactivity of digitally immersive wayfinding.

## **Movement**

Through Heidegger's world-picture, we see wayfinding as a designation of one point to another; we 'enframe' (Heidegger, 1977). Tim Ingold (2011) calls enframing an inversion of movement, which is contrary to an embodied experience of navigating through place. He contends that life is not unfolding inside places (place bound), but place-binding; "along paths preceding along the way, leaving a trail, meeting and entwining in their trails, making knots, the more entwined (more social relations), the greater density of the knot" (2011, 148). Ingold uses the term wayfaring to describe this, noting Indigenous cultures around the world still actively conceive the world in this way. Conversely, a western logic of inversion is a modern rational epistemology that designs one's mental response towards compliance, bound by regulations of place. Ingold argues what has been lost is a perceptual aptitude of one's mental response to a place emerging as they author and express place in flight. For Indigenous cultures, they might talk, sing, write, paint, touch, walk respectively, of life, light, sound and weather and so on. Movement

is to actively express; to read place (Muecke et al., 1996) contrary to passively receiving through an enframed screen. Movement is also an aesthetic/political stance, as Foucault would remind us, where central authority fragments as one moves unshackled from centres of power. Poignant to this discussion, physical movement of climate migrants performs an act of breaking down barriers as one becomes nimble and disassociated from power. Decolonial wayfinding then, might explore what it means to provide services that inculcate social relations through and with these paths of movement, that give citizens authorship over expressing resilience and adaptation through and beyond borders of place.

## Decolonial Wayfinding

As should by now be evident, wayfinding is an ontological designing thing (as with all things, humans and lifeworlds). Anne-Marie Willis summarises the hermeneutic approach to understanding experience of being ontologically designing and designed as, “we design our world, while our world acts back on us and designs us” (Willis, 2007). Ontologies are ever-changing as changed by our mental perception and interactions with the world. Therefore, the way we relate to ‘things’ offers intrusions into existing ontologies and affordances towards new ones. The ability, as designers, to work in recognition of this is the ability to unshackle from the myth of a closed loop one-world narrative; and to amplify previously concealed and incommensurable wayfinding design opportunities. This is to consciously activate (rather than just unknowingly, ignorantly or unconsciously activate) ontological design. Designers might facilitate a means to project and communicate socio-cultural, sociotechnical and geopolitical future challenges arriving on city streets, through wayfinding that either contests or activates ontological affordances in the above layers. In this, ‘metrofitting’, as conceptualized by Tony Fry (2015) offers a method of praxis of ontological design/ing enquiry that decolonial wayfinding might adopt. The term metrofitting etymologically is a derivative of retrofit, yet retrofit tends to only describe the technical adaptation of material structures; houses, built environments and urban spaces. Metrofitting, as Fry (2015, 64) describes,

*“goes more to the very fabric of everyday life in every respect. In this, picturing the risks of the city is not just a pragmatic exercise but a process of continuous and fundamental transformation of perceptions of both risks and the capacity of a city to deal with them...a comprehensive practice of urban adaptation”.*

Fry supports transformative wayfinding such as “safe houses and low-budget sacrificial structures that can be abandoned in extreme weather events, designed to collapse and not break up” (2015, 64). He calls to action communication designers to tackle massive prefigurative practical wayfinding communication challenges, central to significant adaptive design action, such as code-building risk and protection levels, way-finding signs to protection shelters, evacuation routes and evacuation centres, the location of rescue equipment, emergency food, water and medical supplies and centres (Fry, 2015). As Fry notes, rolling out this adaptive action over time is not only practical, and potentially fiscally responsible, it is indivisible from ontological designing into city streets an ecology of images; of resilience, adaptability and preparedness.

In summary, through an exploration of layers of critical mapping; world-picture; and movement, a designer is prepared to move towards praxis of decolonial wayfinding. The following critical discourse analysis and case studies are concerned with explorations of the presence of this agency.

## METHODOLOGY

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) was the method used to interrogate what is driving several Brisbane and Gold Coast city government documents and, consequently, the design implementation of wayfinding in those cities. CDA is a good fit here because wayfinding manifests on city streets guided by these documents; any change in the discourse in these documents wields power; the discourse performs with intention to encourage or discourage preparedness to the complexity of future challenges. CDA has been used increasingly in the last decade for analysis of environmental policy to explain how “language is used to shape opinions and views of environmental politics within the policy making process” (Oliver, 2012, 10). Here language is analysed starting with a set of keywords, chosen because they cover a broad enough area to illuminate discussion related to wayfinding, amongst other unrelated content in the documents, and they provide a manageable scope for the purposes of this study. The context in which these keywords are evoked is taken into account and coded using parameters below. The words are: wayfind(ing), retrofit(ing), design(ing), information (design), signage, image(s), adapt(ation), resilience, map(ping), future, transform(ing), disaster, perception, history(ical), communication, Indigenous, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander. Overall, 11 documents were analysed. Data was coded through an adaptation of John Dryzek’s *Environmental Discourses* (2005). Dryzek’s categories provided a simple framework to make deductions on where motives in the keywords fit in the framework created. The simple framework is as such: basic appearance; assumptions; motives, and; key metaphors and rhetorical devices employed.

## RESULTS

Five areas were identified in the documents. These are categorised as: practical wayfinding; inclusive wayfinding; disaster management wayfinding; wayfinding and other ways-of-knowing wayfinding; and ontological metrofitting. The first category, practical wayfinding, was most present, directly related to practical and functional wayfinding information systems and explicit guides. The second most prominent was inclusive wayfinding. Thirdly, much less explicit and frequent, disaster management wayfinding is present. However, terms ‘wayfinding’ or ‘signage’ are seldom used, rather the documents ambiguously allude to putting these systems in place with information, education and communication strategies. Furthermore, causalities of disaster almost entirely are reduced to storms and flooding without context of climate change. Fourth, wayfinding and other ways of knowing are essentially absent from the documents. The closest relationship to this category is the four times across all documents where a mention of other ways of knowing in relation to ‘being inclusive’, or having an Indigenous historical narrative, is present. And finally, ontological metrofitting, as described above, is also absent. The following is a discussion of these results.

## DISCUSSION

The practical wayfinding category basic appearance is; bikeway navigation and improvement, a network of wayfinding signs, and sophisticated, user-friendly, digital information hubs along with city-wide way finding strategies. The predominant assumption here is that all citizens are on board with the seductive interactivity of digitally immersive wayfinding described in the world-picture layer earlier. Actors seem motivated by the economic rationalism that comes with technocratic efficiency in the face of increasing populations. A key rhetorical device that illustrates this:

*"With more pedestrians on the streets, getting around the city centre easily and safely will become an even greater priority. A network of wayfinding signs and sophisticated, user-friendly, digital information hubs will provide users with maps, transport information and even language services... (Brisbane City Council, 2014, 28)"*

The inclusive wayfinding category basic appearance is: Universal Design and hazard/risk mitigation by standardization and compliance. Two key assumptions are a) that Universal Design gives the most amount of people the broadest accessibility, and b) that the natural world is a hazard to be commanded. A scientific rationalist conception of nature and a standardization of difference for the sake of efficiency and standardization of compliance seem to motivate actors. A key rhetorical device that illustrates this:

*"Universal design allows everyone, to the greatest extent possible and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products and services without the need for specialised or adapted features (Brisbane City Council, 2012, 4)"*

The Wayfinding Disaster management category basic appearance is; management and recovery, public information and announcements, raise awareness, mitigation strategies, communication strategies and early warning flood strategies. Key assumptions being made are that disaster response is a short term, technical and practical concern, and when a social concern, it is a communication approach outside the realm of using wayfinding to raise the symbolic value of preparedness and resilience. Actors seem motivated to maintain a complacency to long-term transformational adaptive measures that disrupt progress and development. A key rhetorical device that illustrates this:

*"The Local Disaster Management Group maintains a coordinated approach to community awareness and education, by way of: increasing community awareness about disaster preparation and disaster warning systems through effective communication strategies and education programs" (City of Gold Coast, 2013, 40)*

The wayfinding and other ways of knowing category basic appearance only appears four times either as a reference to Inclusive Design or valuing traditional stories of Indigenous occupation. Key assumptions being made in this discourse is that Indigenous Knowledge has no role to play except in a historical context; a storytelling context where those colonial narratives enfold into an assumed agreed history of the site. This suggests actors and their motives are Eurocentric. A key rhetorical device that illustrates this:

*"Our Indigenous and Multicultural team also build networks with grassroots community groups across the city to ensure that our services and projects are inclusive of all people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (Brisbane City Council, 2012, 70). And, "highlight the diverse character of our river's edge through a series of walking and cycling trails exploring key themes of our river including: Indigenous stories of the rivers significant natural features and colonial history" (Brisbane City Council, 2013, 14).*

In relation to ontological metrofitting, the analysis produced some promising results. There is some general discourse that one could argue fits into the layers of framing above. The problem is it is not matched with specific wayfinding action points, and it seldom specifically defines the kind of wayfinding concerns arriving on city streets over the coming decades, as outlined above. As such one can only deduce that the basic appearance and the key assumptions bear little difference to the disaster management wayfinding assumptions above. Interestingly, on many occasions when a portion of text

comes close to ontological metrofitting, it simultaneously contradicts Universal design principles outlined in other portions of text. For example, texts below use terms such as 'retrofit' and 'adaptable to change'. Key rhetorical devices that illustrate this, and may have potential to perform with intention to encourage an ontological preparedness to the complexity of future challenges are:

*"We will constantly adopt new energy technologies to maintain our competitive edge as global energy costs rise. We will continue to seek the latest sustainable energy and construction technology and waste management systems, and find innovative ways to retrofit existing buildings. We will always be one step ahead of the future" (Brisbane City Council, 2014, 24).*

*"The influence of climate change and sea level rise must also be factored into planning and design. Guidance should ensure floor levels and car parking respond to the risks of climate change, storm surge and flooding" (City of Gold Coast, 2011, 74).*

In summary, the discourse across all eleven documents promotes and drives inclusiveness, however, Universal Design goes unchallenged. Disaster management wayfinding remains reticent to long-term transformational adaptive measures that disrupt progress and development. Systems that purport to elevate other ways of knowing predominantly remain trapped in a Eurocentric discourse. There is also a dominant technocratic tone across all documents and an almost complete lack of ontological metrofitting. Practical and functional wayfinding information systems that enhance navigation and interaction are adequately present, however the guidelines do little to enable the kind of decolonial wayfinding and ontological metrofitting outlined in the layers above, arguably needed for citizens to be prepared and resilient in the face of future challenges. It is acknowledged that the results reflect the limitation of not analysing the wayfinding strategies currently under development in both cities. However, guided by the documents analysed here a similar conclusion seems fated.

## **CASE STUDIES: DECOLONIAL WAYFINDING**

Two case studies in Brisbane and the Gold Coast will now be briefly discussed. These early explorations draw connections with the documents analysed, but intend to go beyond their discourse toward decolonial wayfinding and ontological metrofitting. They are of a critical and speculative nature, offering visionary concepts unshackled from the bounds of planning schemes and feasibility studies. As such they're far from resolved, but register a platform to begin.

### **Case Study 1: Brisbane: Kangaroo Point Wayfinding**

Over an eight-week period in 2016 final year undergraduate visual communication design students, under the author's supervision, were tasked with developing wayfinding concepts for an inner city park area beside Brisbane River, known as Kangaroo Point. Ironically, a forward-thinking Brisbane City Council planner was involved in developing elements of the brief that asked students to design functional wayfinding information systems that enhance navigation and interaction at the site, as well as prepare citizens for potential disaster events (such as river flooding). Beyond this, the brief required students develop concepts that interact with histories and conflicting interests at the place. Most importantly, the brief required students design wayfinding systems that redirect the symbolic value of the city as an image of a future prepared, resilient and adaptable city. The theoretical framing outlined in this paper had been made familiar to

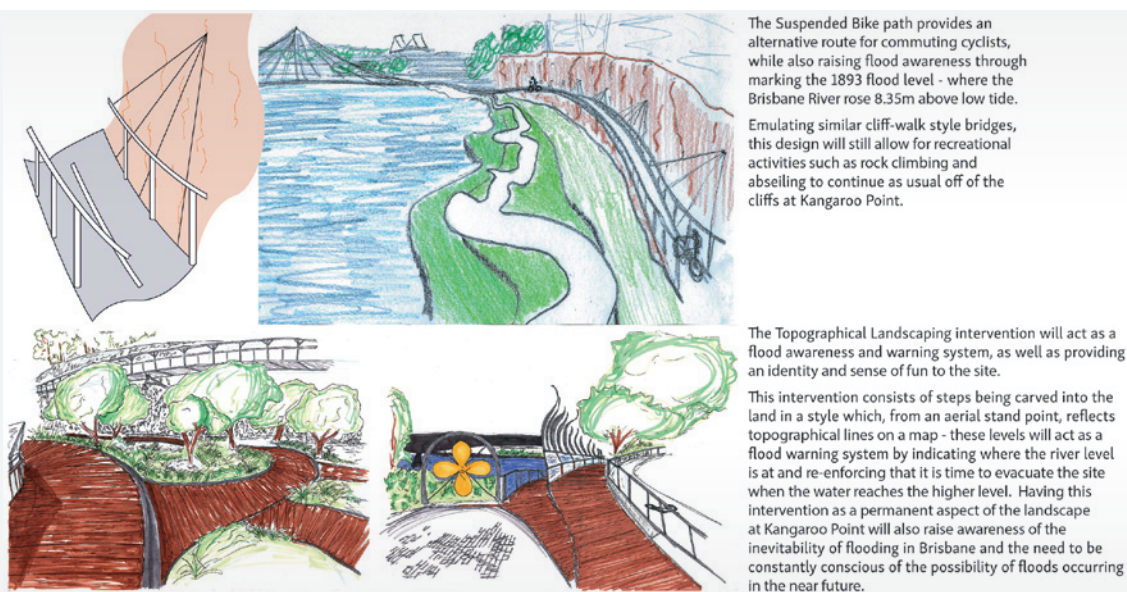


the students during briefings and more broadly over their preceding years at university with myself as their supervisor.

Evidence from their outcomes suggests that the kind of framing outlined in this paper can produce radically different ways to think about wayfinding. For example, one group wrote in their design statement:

“The goal of this project is to make Kangaroo Point feel more alive and accessible, while also highlighting its personality in recognition of it being an ‘ending space’ that will, in the not too distant future, no longer be inhabitable as a public space when sea levels rise”.

Notably, while this group successfully designed functional traditional signage systems, they also conceptualised a bike path suspended to the rock wall, indicating the level of 1893 floodwaters. The rock wall is an iconic Brisbane landmark, so the image of this line made by the path is provocative. It intervenes in the picturesque natural view citizens have of the wall (a myth in itself considering the wall is actually an artificial environment; remains of an old quarry), and forces an alternative narrative onto the wall for participants to be reminded about sea level rise. This group also designed a flood warning system to be landscaped into the site. As certain terraces filled, citizens would become aware of the expected arrival, velocity and height of a flood (Figure1).



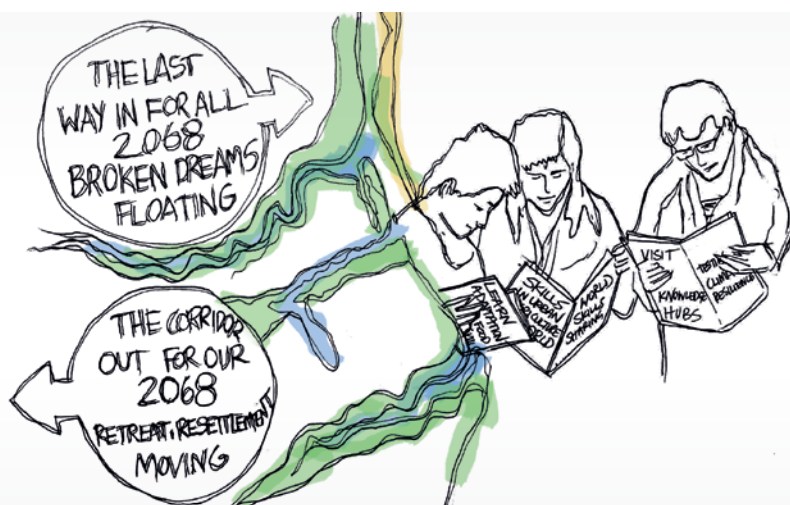
**Figure 1:** Brisbane Kangaroo Point 3rd year undergraduate Bachelor of Design-Visual Communication Design students' concept sketches. Permission to reproduce work has been given by students.

## Case study 2: Gold Coast: Wayfinding Event

To coincide with a major international sporting mega-event hosted by the city in 2018 the author will lead a collective of designers and artists through the delivery of a highly experimental interactive, wayfinding event that aims to open discussion about the future challenges the Gold Coast region faces. Participants will walk a route encountering a series of perception changing experiences between and throughout five knowledge hubs throughout the city. Field trip notebooks, GPS geo-caching nodes and more traditional wayfinding systems will guide the walker through layers of knowledge discovery, such as climatic events and associated risks, evacuation routes and emergency scenarios,

local, regional and global traces and opportunities of resilient food practices such as urban agricultural production, and cultural histories and tensions.

An early conceptual example of a knowledge hub is the Nomadism Hub: Set as a 2100 Fiction, in an installation setting similar to a Mt. Everest Camp, yet at an urban abandoned site, directional wayfinding guides walkers towards opposing journeys; the last way into the Gold Coast through masses of urban sprawl, and the last way out, along the ridge line defeating the rising sea (Figure 2). Other knowledge hubs, each with differing propositions, include the Elimination Hub; Adaptation Hub; Repair Hub; Transparency Hub; and Exchange Hub.



**Figure 2:**  
Gold Coast  
wayfinding  
event early  
concept sketch.  
Author Tristan  
Schultz

## CONCLUSION

There is an increasing urgency for designers to use their skills to address mounting future challenges. Wayfinding is an area in which this can happen, by ontologically shifting public perceptions of what the future will bring, contributing to crucial psychological adaptation that enormous numbers of people will have to undergo as citizens transition toward resilient and adaptable cities. It has been argued that in order for wayfinding to contribute in this way, the discourse broadly, and particularly in the guiding documents of Brisbane and Gold Coast cities analysed here, needs to expand significantly to incorporate a comprehension of decolonial wayfinding. Through three framing layers—critical mapping; world-picture; and movement—and a framing of the praxis of decolonial wayfinding—the results of an analysis show that the guidelines only minimally design a discourse that prepares citizens for mounting future challenges. Instead, the discourse predominantly remains trapped in Eurocentrism, technocentrism and economic rationalism. Of note is that the results reflect a methodological limitation of not analysing the wayfinding strategies currently under development in both cities. However, guided by the documents analysed here a similar conclusion could be fated. Two case studies discussed are making attempts to close the gap between necessary planning systems in the documents analysed and decolonial wayfinding outlined here. However, since they are of a critical and speculative nature, they're far from resolved and aim only to offer a platform to begin. Both their feasibility and their transformative efficacy need interrogating, of which a follow up paper will discuss. In summary, if one agrees that

modernity, colonialism and globalisation underpin much of the structural unsustainability reaching our city streets, there remains much work to be done to question, through the political agency of Decolonial Wayfinding, radically alternative systems for citizens to transition toward sustainable futures.

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# WATER FILTERING SIDEWALK FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**JOANNA M. KWIATKOWSKA- DAOUD**

Notre Dame University Louaize Lebanon. E: jkwiatkowska@ndu.edu.lb

## ABSTRACT

The streets cover vast part of the urbanized areas with durable materials that creates an impermeable layer. The sealed areas alter natural hydrological cycle generating severe problems of rainfall water runoff, surface water pollution and local flooding. The traditional stormwater drainage system allows big waste of water resources and is inefficient in terms of water management. In the presence of increasing water scarcity and decreasing safety of potable water better management of the resource is required. However, in number of developed countries the water used for toilets flushing is still potable water.

The objective of this paper is to introduce novel vision of water filtering system incorporated within the street pavement. The reciprocal influence of pedestrian infrastructure on water qualities is on the root of my conceptual approach. The project design is focused not on its formal aspects but on the expansion of its function in order to answer actual and future needs. The traditional pedestrian infrastructure is redesign in order to filter stormwater from the streets and grey water from the households. The system combines permeable pavement with functional principles of slow sand filtration. The biofiltration method inspired from the nature is characterized by efficiency in bacteria pathogens removal, passive operation and easy maintenance. This eco-friendly solution helps to conserve the water resources and mitigates the problem of rainfall runoff, local flooding and surface water pollution. The theoretical study presented in this paper claims that one 3 meters long unit of the filtering sidewalk can recycle between 26000 – 39000 liters of water per day. This volume of water is typically consumed every day by 75- 110 individuals. The treated water can be safely reused in the households for the irrigation and toilets flushing or redirected for further treatment.

## KEYWORDS

Passive water filtering, biofiltration, sustainable infrastructure

## INTRODUCTION

The streets cover vast part of the urbanized areas with durable materials such as concrete, stone and asphalt creating an impermeable layer over the surface. The sealed areas alter natural hydrological cycle generating several problems in our modern cities. Rainwater cannot infiltrates through the streets and washes off sediments and pollutants discharging them into the surface water bodies.. Moreover, during the heavy rainfalls the drainage system often cannot cope with the amount of water causing local flooding. The traditional stormwater drainage system allows big waste of water resources and is inefficient in terms of water management.

In the past decade we have observed a rising awareness of governments and communities that shows interest in finding more sustainable water management solutions as a source of long term environmental and economic profits. Nowadays, the use of pervious concrete and other paving materials that ensure water drainage are common strategies to prevent local flooding, rainfall runoff and allow recharge underground waters. These techniques improve the water drainage from the streets to the ground and may be considered efficient to mitigate the mentioned issues. However, in presence of increasing water scarcity and decreasing safety of potable water better management of the resource is required.

In number of developed countries the water used for toilets flushing is still potable water.

The objective of this paper is to introduce the new vision of water filtering system incorporated within the street pavement. The reciprocal influence of pedestrian infrastructure on water qualities is on the root of the conceptual approach. The link between both, infrastructural and hydrological aspects gives the opportunity to re-elaborate traditional pedestrian infrastructure into unique system for more responsible water management. This study evaluates the potential of pedestrian infrastructure to filter rainwater and grey water from the households. The project aims to optimize the use of water resources and mitigate the problems of rainfall runoff, local flooding, and surface water pollution by applying novel approach for the eco-friendly urban design.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach consists of both theoretical research and development of new idea of the water filtering sidewalk. In order to understand how such system could be applied and to evaluate its efficiency the analytical study of existing water filtering methods was done.

To find the most appropriate filtering technique that could be apply in the filtering sidewalk system the different existing water treatments methods where studied from the ecological point of view. The particular attention was given to the passive ways of water purification that include physical processes and biological purification such as; slow sand filtration (biofiltration), rapid sand filtration and active carbon. The slow sand filtration results to be the most adapt and may be applied in the project. The advantages of this technique rely in passive operation, minimal maintenance and effectiveness in pathogens removal. In addition, the slow sand filtration is promoted by World Health Organization<sup>1</sup> as a most efficient water treatment method for small communities, also in the areas of water scarcity. According to WHO the construction of small scale filter for household use does not require special skilled workers or machinery, can be self-constructed and maintained.

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<sup>1</sup> Huismans L., Wood W.E, 1974. Slow Sand Filtration. World Health Organization. Geneva.

The theoretical study was useful to build a framework for further development of the idea. The framework was developed from the sustainability perspective. On one side, it is based on the complex understating of biological filtering process and potentials of this method. On the other side, answers to the conceptual assumption to create sustainable water filtering system, enhance the use of water resources and conserve the urban space. The fallowing specifics delineate the conceptual framework for the project development. These characteristic of the projects are essentials in order to meet the previously mentioned goals.

- a) Passive and self-sufficient technology that operates without energy consumption.
- b) Low cost construction, fast to install and easily reversible in order to reduce the time of implementation, cost of materials and labour.
- c) Easy maintenance that does not require sophisticated technology and can be executed by unskilled workers. In addition during the maintenance process pedestrian circulation should not be interrupted.
- d) Efficiency in water treatment. The water at the end of the purification process should meet safety requirements and be suitable for irrigation, toilet flushing or further treatment.

The challenge is to mitigate constrains related to the slow sand filtration used for public supply and make it available even for densely urbanised area. The proposed project use the principals of biofiltration as a water treatment method and apply them in a new inner-urban context into pedestrian infrastructure.

The benefits of this new system are multiple and include many aspects:

### **1) Ecological:**

- Conservation of water resources: reuse of waste water and rainwater, limit the use of primary water in the water –treatment plants, (used generally for the operation and the maintenance).
- Protection of natural water ecosystem: reduction of pollutants introduced to the water bodies with stormwater runoff from the streets.
- Reduce the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>: reduce the use of energy needed for the traditional water treatment plants.

### **2) Urban:**

- Mitigate the problems of local flooding and surface water runoff.

### **3) Economical:**

- Reduce energy cost in comparison to the traditional treatment plants.
- Reduce cost of the primary water for the households.

The paper is divided in two consecutive sections. First part explains the functional principles of biofiltration process and states the limits of the technology. Second, defines the details of the design proposal for the water filtering sidewalk. The second part includes the morphology of the filter and estimates the expected performance. Although, no physical model for the project was built, the design proposal is deducted

from the theoretical research. The quantitative data used during design of the filtering sidewalk are traced from the literature and general recommendations for slow sand filtration method. The performance and the filtering potential of the sidewalk are estimated based on the theoretical potential of slow sand filters and biosand filters<sup>2</sup>. The proposal at this stage omits the issues related to the extreme site characteristics or climatic condition.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The design of water filtering sidewalk is found on the functional principles of slow sand filtration that works in three ways: biological action, physical straining and adsorption. This water purification technique mimics water filtering process that occurs in the nature. The technology known also as a biofiltration is a passive process that does not require any external source of energy. Biofiltration has been used from the beginning of nineteenth century. It was experimented for the first time in 1804 in Scotland. In 1829 it was adopted for the public water supply in London. At the time the filter was used due to its mechanical straining potential since the pathogenic bacteria were not known yet.

The general configuration of slow sand filter unit used for public supply consists of rectangular or cylindrical container, deep between 2.5 meters to 4 meters. The filter is filled with fine sand on the top and layer of gravel on the bottom. From the sand specification<sup>3</sup> depends the effectiveness in removing pathogens and speed at which the water pass through the sand bed, (Hydraulic Loading Rate, HLR). The total depth of the sand bed may vary from 0.6 meter to 1.5 meter. The level of raw water on the top is about 1 meter to 1.5 meter deep.

Slow water infiltration through the sand bed is the key aspect that determinate effectiveness of the filter. Water infiltration rate depends from many variables such as: raw water turbidity, water temperature, type of sand, depth of sand bed and Hydraulic Loading Rate (HLR). Typically, the HLR varies between 0.1 - 0.4 m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>/hour. The optimal infiltration rate is 0.2 m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>/hour and can be controlled through the flow control valve. The slow and constant flow of water assures effective water purification and removal of 90- 99% of the pathogens presented in raw water<sup>4</sup>.

Although, the morphology of the filter is simple the process of water purification that take place when the water passes through the sand is very complex. It includes several different stages: settlement of the particles, straining, filtration, organism removal, organism inactivation, and chemical change.

The raw water that is introduced to the filter needs around two hours to drains through all the layers. During this time the larger particles suspended in the water settle down. Due to the organic matters in the water the biological film is built up on the surface of the sand. This biofilm called *schmutzdecke* is a gelatinous matrix of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, rotifera and algae. This active layer digest and brake down an organic matter to forms its cell materials and oxygen. During this stage carbon dioxide, nitrates, phosphates and other nutrients are absorbed by the biofilm. Oxygen that dissolves in

2 According to the CAWST (Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology), the functional principles of slow sand filters and biosand filters are the same. However, the two terms are generally referred to the filters of different scale. The slow sand filter (SSF) is usually a large plant for public supply while biosand filter are small self-constructed units for household use.

3 The recommended fine sand grain size varies between 0.15-35 mm. The coefficient of uniformity should be 2 or less and according to different sources not more than 2.5 or 3. The sand that is too fine or not uniform may clog the filter, reduce the porosity and slow down the water flow. The sand should be properly manufactured, washed to remove residues of clay, loam and organic matter and blended to the specification. The under drain layer consists of gravel sized between 6mm to 12mm.

4 National Drinking Water Clearinghouse; (U.S.); WV; Tech Brief, Morgantown, June 2000, Slow Sand Filtration.

the water deactivates organic impurities. The water continues to drain down through schmutzdecke and interstices between the sand grains. The general porosity of the sand bed is around 40% and at every surface where the water comes into contact with the sand grains takes place adsorption. At the depth of around 60 cm of the sand bed the water contains only some inorganic salt in solution. At the end of the process the filtered water is clean potable water. Generally, the raw water of moderate quality, (ad example moderate quality surface water) does not require any additional use of chemical. However, the water quality meets the standards for drinking water additional chlorination is a common treatment to ensure the safety.

The main constrain of slow sand filtration technology is related to the area needed for its construction. To compare, in order to filter 50 million m<sup>3</sup> of water per year, the area needed is 20 000 m<sup>2</sup> using slow sand filter and only 3 000 m<sup>2</sup> using rapid sand filter. However, the water filtered using biofiltration generally does not require further treatment while the rapid sand filtration method has to be supported by additional physical and chemical treatment in order to neutralize the bacterial content. The maintenance of rapid sand filtration is also more complicated and required every few days. The frequency of periodical maintenance of slow sand filter may differ from few weeks to few months depends on the raw water turbidity. The cleaning consists of scraping 1-2 centimetres of the sand bed surface that contain mostly organic matter. Moreover, the system remains operative up to 10 years without any additional cost. This aspect of inertness is one of the biggest advantages of the slow sand filtration system.

The vast land area that is required for the construction of slow sand filter plant is the main reason why many municipalities that begin with slow sand filtration for the public supply had to switch to rapid sand technologies as the cities growth. In the presence of more technological advanced, faster and less land consuming water filtering methods<sup>5</sup> for public supply the slow sand filtration is considered remote. However, the efficiency of biofiltration and the potential of improving physical, chemical and bacteriological qualities of the water is beyond the potential of others filtering methods. Nowadays, we can find the examples of large slow sand filters still used for public supply ad example in London, Amsterdam and Warsaw.

## **FILTERING PAVEMENT DESIGN**

As discussed in previous paragraph the slow sand filtration is very effective, passive system to filter raw water. The use of slow sand filters for public water supply would be the most ecologic and economic option. However, the vast land requirements for its construction make the technology unavailable for most of the municipalities. On the other side there are small scale DIY slow sand filters which are affordable option for private use however the quality and safety of outlet water is not usually monitored. Moreover, on the urban scale the small filters have limited importance in terms of water conservation, cost reduction and waste water management.

Integration of biofiltration principles within the structure of pedestrian sidewalk allow to benefit from this passive technology regardless the use of vast land area that would be needed for the alternative water treatment plant. The traditional slow sand filter is used typically to filter water from lakes and rivers. The proposal engages use of waste water from the households and stormwater to be recycled for toilets flushing and irrigation. The distinction between potable water from primary water network and grey water that can be recycle for secondary uses helps to reduce the waste of primary water.

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<sup>5</sup> Bennett A., 23 March 2009. Pathogen removal from water – technologies and techniques.



The outlet water at the end of the filtering process can be directly reused for irrigating field and toilets flushing or directed for further chemical treatment to water treatments plants. The system operates in a passive way so the whole process of water treatment has basically no cost. The redundant volume of water that passed through the sidewalk filter is designated for further quality improvement. The pre-treated water requires minimal additional chemical treatment in order to meet the parameters for potable water and so the time and cost of the treatment process inside the plant are reduced.

The construction of the sidewalk filtering system in direct proximity to the households reduce also the cost of piping system that would be needed if the water treatment plant is located on the outskirts of the city.

## Morphology

The system combines in one body the traditional sidewalk and water purification function.

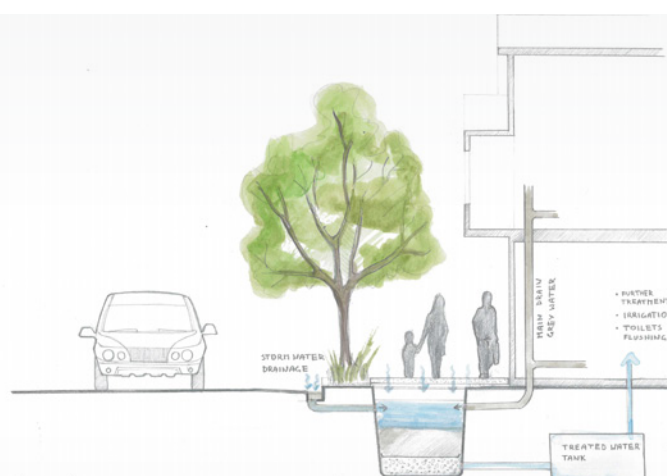


Figure 1  
Filtering Sidewalk - street section

**Figure 1:**  
Filtering  
sidewalk- street  
section

In order to develop simple and sustainable system that can effectively purify stormwater and grey water the project has to address some issues related to the use of the biofiltration as a water filtering method.

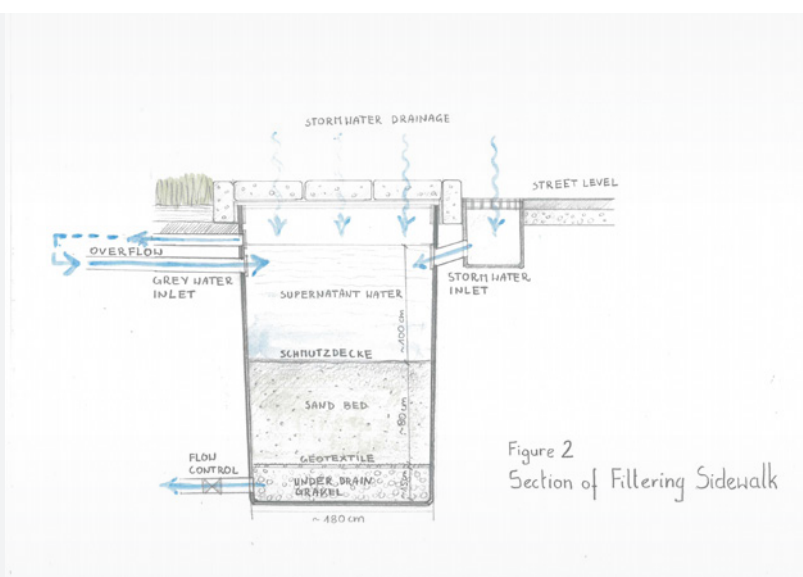
First, the minimal supernatant water level above the sand bed has to be constantly maintained. This is important in order to keep the active layer, (schmutzdecke) alive. Secondly, the accessibility for periodical maintenance has to be easy and the cleaning process should neither interrupt the work of the whole filtering system nor pedestrian circulation.

To this end the design of the filtering sidewalk requires calibration of typical dimensions characteristic for slow sand filters and biosand filters (cross section and surface area). The new system is adapted to the dimension of pedestrian infrastructure in relation to the filtering potential and performance of the filter.

Water detention system is built from prefabricated modules and located under the pavement. Each module is a three meters long tank manufactured from recycled plastic. The use of recycled material for the construction is not only an eco- friendly choice. The

recycled plastic has properties suitable for the construction of detention unit, including mechanical resistance, low maintenance and resistance to the salts and other minerals from the soil that could damage alternative masonry construction. This characteristic of the material makes the project appropriate also for more problematic sites such as maritime regions. Moreover, the plastic unit can be fabricated as one piece element with no junctions using compression molding. The prefabricated elements are easy to transport and install on the site during a relatively short time period. The mentioned aspects reduce significantly the time for the works on site and the labour cost. Each compartment work independently to allow closing temporarily any of the unit for the maintenances or reparation without interrupting the performance of the whole system. The width of the filter house is determinate by the sidewalk width of about 1.8 meters. The total depth is 2.5 meters. The configuration of filtering unit as shown in figure 2 is following:

- a) Water detention tank.
- b) Gravel under-drain layer, 6-10 centimetres. This layer contains the outlet tubing system. The gravel prevents the clogging of the outlet tubing with the fine sand grains.
- c) Geotextile fabric. The separation layer prevents the transition of the fine sand into the underdrain layer and outlet of the filter.
- d) Fine sand bed layer, 0.8 meter.
- e) Supernatant water level above the sand bed, 0.6-1 meter.
- f) Permeable concrete slab supported on metal grid, 10 cm thick



**Figure 2:**  
Section  
of filtering  
sidewalk

The permeable concrete slab is built from the movable blocs installed on the metal grid to allow the access for periodical maintenance. The water that drains down through the slab is primary filtered from the solid particles by the concrete itself. The porosity of pervious concrete frequently used for the infrastructure is about 20% and is adequate for the construction of filtering sidewalk. The specific thickness of this layer has to be calculated in relation to the pedestrian traffic load and other variables important for the design of traditional pedestrian infrastructure. Generally, the thickness of about 10 centimetres should ensure the appropriate resistance<sup>6</sup>.

6 Wanielista M., Chopra Performance M., June 2007. Assessment of Portland Cement Pervious Pavement;; Stormwater Management Academy, University of Central Florida, Orlando.

Stormwater from the streets is introduced through the collector that works as physical strainer and aim to slow down the water flow before entering the filtering device. It is important that inlet water enter the filter with low pressure to not disrupt the biologically active layer on the surface of the sand bed, (schmutzdecke). The inlet is a physical strainer designed as a series of perforated tubes that distribute the water uniformly and at low pressure above the sand bed surface. The raw water that percolate through the sand bed reaches the bottom of the tank from where is directed to the treated water detention tank. The purified water can be reused in the households for irrigation and toilets flushing or receive further treatment such as chlorination. During heavy rainfalls the volume of water may be grater that the filtering potential of the system. The water overflow level has to be controlled and redirected back to the grey water detention device.

## Performance

The most important technical aspect of filtering sidewalk technology is to ensure constant and slow flow of water through the sand bed. A continuous water supply is necessary to keep the movement of the water through the filter layers. The amount of stormwater varies during the different seasons and cannot be considered as an exclusive source. The system relies on two sources of raw water, first is the stormwater that drains from the surface of the streets and sidewalks to the underground filtering unit and second is the greywater from the households. The biofiltration in order to be effective and remove pathogens require slow water drainage. The literature recommends the low flow rate of 200- 300 l/h per m<sup>2</sup>, (HLR , 0.2- 0,3 m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>/hour), to optimize the purification process<sup>7</sup>.

The performance of the filtering unit depends also from the dimensions of the sand bed. The sand bed depth in the case of filtering sidewalk may vary between 0.75- 1 meter. The area of each proposed module is 5.4 m<sup>2</sup>. Considering, recommended flow rate of 200 l/h per m<sup>2</sup> the volume of water filtered in 24 hours is about 26000 liters or 39000 litres if the flow rate is 300 l/h per m<sup>2</sup>. To understand the significance of these values they must be related to the average water consumption.

In developed countries daily water consumption per person varies from as much as 575 liters in United States to 193 liters in Germany<sup>8</sup>. We can assume that the average consumption of primary water per capita is about 350 liters per day. Whereas, the estimative total water consumption per day for a typical residence of five people is about 850- 1200 liters<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, one filtering unit of proposed dimension 5.4m<sup>2</sup> could recycle grey water generated by 75-110 individuals or 32– 40 households composed of five residents. The treated water stored in the tank has to at first satisfy the residential needs. The remaining volume can be used ad example for irrigation of public greenery or directed for further treatment.

When the water flow through the sand bed slows down the periodical cleaning of the sidewalk filter has to take place. The maintenance is not complicated and can be executed by unskilled worker. The operation consists of mechanical scraping off the top layer of the sand bed that contains mostly the organic maters. The removed slime can be generally used as an organic fertilizer.

7 The literature refers to the moderate water quality and turbidity characteristic of the surface water sources.

8 United Nations Development Program - Human Development Report, 2006. Average Water Use per Person per Day - Data360.

9 Data estimated using Water Consumption Calculator, Based on the Desert Water Agency 2002 public data.

## Other consideration

The proposed design of water filtering sidewalk presents the general morphology, scale of the project and expected performance. However, to establish the optimal dimensions of the filtering unit the particular characteristics of the site and raw water quality have to be studied. It is necessary to conduct the laboratory tests for inlet and outlet water condition to evaluate the safety of the filtered water. The singular dimensions of the system will differ in relation to the construction site constraints and raw water quality. The execution of pilot project is necessary in order to evaluate effectiveness and optimize the system. The operation of pilot project has to consider the volume of the grey water produced by the households and annual rainfalls. This is crucial for the dimensioning of grey water detention tank and raw water management. The system has to be also dotted for the treated water detention tank that could be located within the filtering unit under the sidewalk or external. These variables have to be calculated a priori in relation to the site characteristics, average daily and seasonal raw water volume and ultimate destination of the treated water. In addition, the management of overflow water also present some limits. The inlet water volume that exceeds the filtering potential of the sidewalk can be redirected back to the grey water detention tank or avert to infiltrate directly to soil. The mechanism of overflow control may need to be dotted with small electrical pump. The energy needed could be provided by the external solar panels integrated within the street design. The concept of filtering sidewalk presents the opportunity to be redeveloped in different ways according to the necessities. The system projected as a simple passive structure for residential use and managed by the local community can be developed forward with more sophisticated materials and technologies in order to improve the filtering potential and treated water quality.

## CONCLUSIONS

The system of filtering sidewalk has a potential to contribute positively to more responsible water management in the urbanized areas. Application of biofiltration is an excellent passive filtering method for water purification. It allows removing turbidity and pathogenic bacteria from stormwater and greywater without using chemicals or expensive technologies. Moreover, the general morphology of the filter can be modified and adapted to different sites and raw water conditions. The proposal met the prerequisites. First, the technology does not require electrical energy to operate. Secondly, it is efficient water treatment. Lastly, the construction and maintenance are simple easy to execute.

However, the biggest advantage of filtering sidewalk relies in the eco-friendly aspects the technology brings also public and private economical profits. At the end of the purification process part of the water is recycled for toilets flushing and irrigation. The remaining water that is directed for further quality improvement needs only minimal treatment. In consequence the high cost of fuel and electricity that is needed for other filtering technologies is reduced.

The project has also the potential to become a local governance and social initiative. The users can be actively involved during the construction and maintenance processes. This helps to introduce the issues of natural resources protection and bounds the people together in building the strong and responsible community. The project presents a novel vision for the streets design focused not on the formal aspects but on the expansion of functions in order to answer actual and future needs.

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# RESILIENCE THINKING IN POST-CONFLICT PLANNING OF BEIRUT CENTRAL DISTRICT

**ALLAM ALKAZEI and KOSUKE MATSUBARA**

University of Tsukuba Japan.

E: s1520512@sk.tsukuba.ac.jp, and matsub@sk.tsukuba.ac.jp

## ABSTRACT

The Middle East has been the arena for numerous armed conflicts in the last few decades, and the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) was one of their worst. The civil war had a heavy toll on the country, especially its capital, Beirut. Beirut bore the disastrous consequences of the conflicts which left its Central District in devastation due to the “fierce battles and barbarous cruelties” (Khalaf 2013). A company called Solidere was formed for the project of rebuilding the heart of Beirut after the civil war. The redevelopment project was on a large scale, and it was a challenging project according to its planners (Gavin and Maluf 1996). After years of redevelopment process, current Beirut has made major recovery steps on both infrastructure and planning level. However, the post-conflict redevelopment had its own impacts on the city’s social and physical form. This paper aims to assess the development project of Beirut Central District from an urban resilience approach based on the Resilience Thinking in Planning (RTP) assessment model (Pinho et al. 2013). The assessment will shed the light on the impacts of the implementation of the project by comparing the proposed design provided in the original plan with the actual implementation observed in field survey.

## KEYWORDS

Urban Resilience, Post-conflict Redevelopment, Beirut Central District.

## INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are not new to the Middle East. The region has been the arena for numerous political and armed conflicts in the last few decades especially after the start of the wave of Arab Spring. This wave has spread to different countries in The Middle East with outcomes ranging from regime change in some countries to armed conflicts in others. In some cases, the conflicts have escalated to an alarming level until they morphed into a civil war like the Syrian situation. Five years have passed since the beginning of the civil war in Syria -which started in March 2011- without finding a concrete solution to stop the war until the present day. The conflicts of the civil war left disastrous destruction in different urban areas in Syria including historical and heritage sites like the ruins of Palmyra and the old city of Aleppo. However, The Syrian civil war did not only have a heavy toll in Syria alone, but also affected the surrounding countries with significant number of refugees and conflicts at the borders especially for its neighbour Lebanon. According to the UNHCR, more than one million registered Syrian refugees had fled from the conflicts to Lebanon by January 2016 ((UNHCR) 2016). On the other hand, Lebanon itself is a country still recovering from decades of both political and armed conflicts and has its own experience with a long era of civil war. The Lebanese Civil War had led to the deterioration of the economy and services in the country. The capital Beirut -and especially its central district- had to bear consequences of the conflicts leaving behind a burden of damaged buildings and debris. The fifteen years of civil war harvested the souls of tens of thousands of citizens and displaces even more. By the end of the war everyone realised the urgent need for reconstruction after seeing the degree of destruction. To solve issues of property and funds of the redevelopment process, a company called Solidere was created and it supervised the redevelopment project of Beirut Central District as a medium between private investors, the government and property owners. The disturbance-prone context of Lebanon and whole region suggests the probability of future conflicts and emphasizes the need for resilience in the redevelopment process. Since "the increased number of disasters has enhanced the necessity of resilience in social studies" (Taşan-Kok et al. 2013), assessing the resilience in planning and the preparation of Beirut for future disturbances (in this case armed conflict) is important. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the project's impacts on the city from an urban resilience perspective and assess its contribution in creating a resilient city of Beirut in case of future conflict taking place. Using the Resilience Thinking in Planning (RTP) assessment model(Pinho et al. 2013), the paper will shed the light on the impacts of the implementation of the project from a resilience perspective by comparing the proposed design provided in the original plan with the actual implementation observed in field survey. As for the structure of the paper, after giving a setting for the case study in the introduction, section 2 of the paper gives a background about the Beirut Central District and the destruction reflected to its elements during Lebanese Civil War. It briefly sheds the light on the origin of the conflict and its development. Section 3 provides an outline of the redevelopment project for the central district after the civil war. It also states the main characteristics of the master plan of the project. Section 4 includes an overview of urban resilience and its definitions in related research. Then an integration of the previous sections is provided in the assessment process of resilience thinking in planning of the redevelopment of Beirut Central District. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings of the paper.

## BEIRUT CENTRAL DISTRICT

Beirut Central District is a multi-layered district with history dating back to the Roman Empire. It includes historical sites and buildings; religious buildings for Islam, Christianity and Judaism; public buildings such as The Grande Serail. In addition, in a contemporary context, Beirut Central District has a significant value for the capital for several reasons. First, its location in the heart of the city (Figure 1). Also, it resembles the connection between the port on the Mediterranean Sea and Beirut International Airport. Furthermore, Beirut Central District is considered a financial centre in the Middle East which enhances its importance not only for Lebanon but for the region as well. As for the planning history of the Beirut Central District, it dates back to the French Mandate with the plan of Rene Danger (1932). In the second half of the twentieth century, international cooperation in terms of urban planning in Lebanon -with planners from countries like France and Japan- led to the creation of Beirut's master plan in 1963 by Michel Ecochard and Gyoji Banshoya (Matsubara 2014). Additionally, the need for cooperation efforts in urban planning was gaining more attention during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). The massive destruction which took place in the central district led to the several attempts to make reconstruction plans such as the APUR's plan (Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme) in 1978 and the I'AURIF' plan (Institut d'Amenagements et d'Urbanisme de la Region d'Ile de France) in 1986. However, the continuation of the conflicts among other reasons prevented the plans from reaching actualization. Figure 1 highlights the location of the central district in Beirut. It also shows the strategic position in the heart of the city and its role as connecting part between the West part with Muslim majority and East part with Christian one which explains the sensitive character of the district.

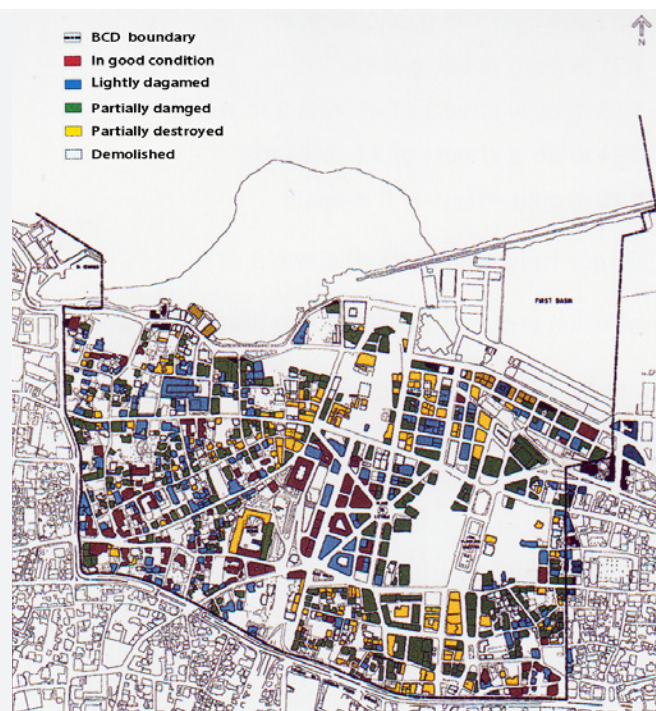


**Figure 1:** Satellite Imagery of Beirut in May 2005 showing the location of Beirut Central District (Edited)

## THE CIVIL WAR AND DESTRUCTION

The Palestinian militias' power in Lebanon- which also had a regional and international dimensions- was behind the dispute between the Muslims and Christians in the country which eventually triggered the civil war in 1975. Fifteen years of the civil war (1975-1990) left a heavy toll on the whole country that led to rapid deterioration of economy and services. The war's burden made it quite difficult for Lebanon to recover easily.

The conflicts had disastrous consequences with half of the population getting displaced and 150,000 in fatalities (Sarkis 2005). Even though many areas in the country were affected by the armed conflicts, the location of Beirut Central District in the middle ground between West Muslim and East Christian Beirut left the district in devastation due to the “fierce battles and barbarous cruelties” (Khalaf 2013). During the course of the civil war in Lebanon, several countries intervened either to stop the armed conflicts or to support their allies in the war. The end of the civil war witnessed an on-the-ground intervention from the Syrian neighbour with approval of the Arab countries. The civil war stopped after the implementation of the Taif Agreement to mark an end of a horrifying era in the contemporary history of Lebanon. Figure 2 shows the degree of damages reflected to the buildings in the central district by the end of the conflicts according to a field investigation and a building-by-building field survey conducted by Solidere (Saliba 2003). Clusters of partially destroyed buildings (shown in yellow) could be seen in different areas within the district as a result of the heavy conflicts in those areas.



**Figure 2:** Building Condition 1994

## THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF BEIRUT CENTRAL DISTRICT

During the course of the civil war several attempts for reconstruction plans were suggested. However, those plans were not realized because of the continuing conflicts. After the official end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990, the degree of destruction reflected to the central district was a shocking sight for all the parties. As a result, Lebanese government reached a realization that a reconstruction project was an urgent necessity. However, the destruction was on large scale that required significant funds for reconstruction. Another issue was handling the complex property rights of individual owners. As a solution for these issues, a vehicle to connect the private investors with property owners was required which led to the creation of Solidere. Solidere -Société libanaise pour le développement et la reconstruction du Centre-Ville de Beyrouth- (The Lebanese Company for the development and reconstruction of Beirut Central District) was formed for the project of rebuilding the heart of Beirut after the civil war. According to the planners, the redevelopment project might be considered as “one of the world’s



most significant and challenging urban regeneration projects in implementation at the turn of the millennium” (Gavin and Maluf 1996). Figure 3 illustrates the situation of the buildings and streets in the central district after the implementation of the redevelopment project. The photo was taken by the author during fieldwork in September 2015.

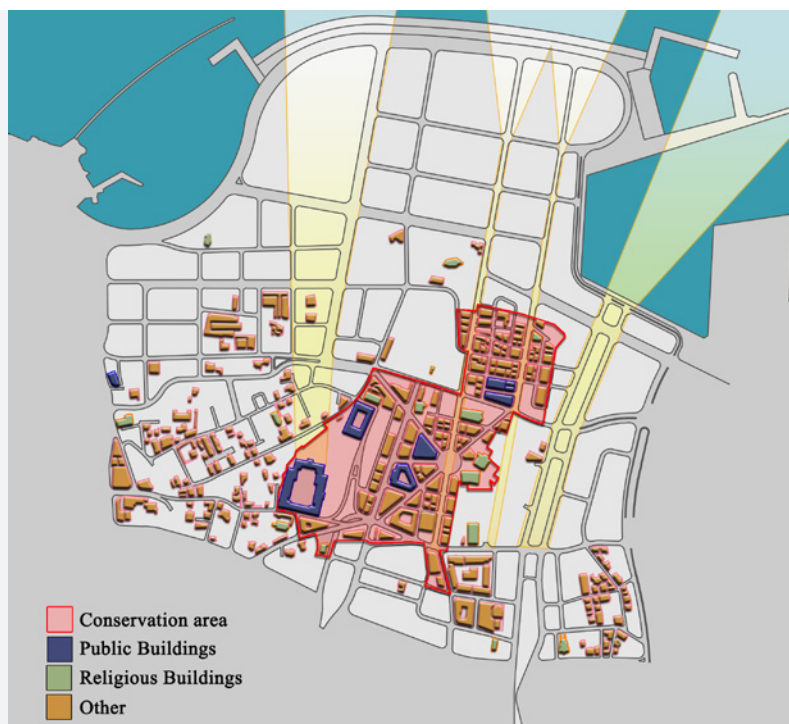


**Figure 3:** The situation after the implementation of the redevelopment project

## THE MASTER PLAN

By 1994, a master plan for the redevelopment project of Beirut Central District was created to pave the way for the healing process for Lebanon and the Lebanese. Still, due to the unique characteristics of Beirut Central District, the master plan had to take into consideration its sensitive fabric -explained in section 2.1-. Therefore, the master plan recognizes a conservation area in the district (shown in orange in Figure 4) that includes the heritage sites and buildings. Buildings located in the conservation area required special treatment in the redevelopment project because of their cultural value. In addition, the master plan was based on mixed use development including residential, commercial, offices and hotels land uses. The plan also emphasized on the relation between the district and the sea by creating three main view corridors (highlighted in Figure 4 in yellow). Planners have set high regulations in three axes- from left to right: The Grand Serial Axis, The Place d'Etoile Axis and Martyrs' Square Axis- to avoid visual obstruction of the sea. Figure 4 shows the Master plan of the redevelopment of Beirut Central District.





**Figure 4:**  
the master  
plan for the  
redevelopment  
of Beirut  
Central District  
(1994)

The redevelopment project covers an areas of 191 ha (Solidere 2016). According to Solidere's website, around 62% of this area originally constituting the traditional city center and the remaining 38% will be an extension reclaimed from the sea. As for area allocation, Figure 5 shows the area allocated in hectare (ha) for different land uses in the project.

### Urban resilience and Resilience Thinking in Planning

Since urban resilience is still relatively a new concept to planning studies, providing a basic understanding of the meaning of urban resilience is necessary. The resilience concept was not introduced into planning literature until later years of its development. Resilience was coined by Holling (Holling 1973) regarding the ability of ecological systems to absorb change and disturbances more than four decades ago. Then, the concept found its echo among researchers in social studies but a sort of ambiguity was surrounding the concept and its definition. Since resilience became an interdisciplinary notion, different definitions have been used to describe it. If we examine the definition of resilience depending on the study area, a recent definition of resilience could explain it as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures" (Jha et al. 2013). Another definition for resilience was given by Walker defining it as "the potential of a system to remain in a particular configuration and to maintain its feedbacks and functions, and involves the ability of a system to reorganize following disturbance-driven change" (Walker et al. 2002). Then Walker later defined it as "the capacity of a system to experience shocks while retaining essentially the same function, structure, feedbacks, and therefore identity" (Walker et al. 2006). As for planning context, in the explanation of resilience thinking in planning, Taşan-Kok, Stead and Lu defined it as "the capacity of a system to undergo change and still retain its basic function and structure after facing an

external disturbance”(Taşan-Kok et al. 2013). Recently, resilience related studies are increasing in planning literature which might be because “planning practice has been unable to satisfy the needs, and existing planning theories have failed to come up with a framework to deal with the increasing vulnerabilities of urban areas and cities and the insecurities of the public”(Eraydin and Tasan-Kok 2013). In order for a system to absorb and bounce back from disturbances, resilience in planning assumes that disturbances will happen to the system -in our case: urban areas- and therefore, planners should help in providing the means for the system to be able to absorb these disturbances and have the required adaptive capacity to cope with them. Therefore, assessing resilience thinking in the redevelopment of Beirut Central District will shed the light on the degree for preparation of the city for future disturbances.

### **Assessment of Resilience Thinking in Planning of Beirut Central District after the civil war**

The assessment process of resilience in the development project of Beirut Central District is based on the Resilience Thinking in Planning (RTP) assessment model (Pinho et al. 2013). Even though this model has been used to assess the resilience thinking in planning in European cities (Dias et al. 2013),(Oliveira et al. 2013),(Eraydin et al. 2013),(Schmitt et al. 2013) and (Stead and Ta an-Kok 2013), applying the model in cities with other planning structure will enrich the resilience related studies. Eraydin argues in Resilience Thinking in Urban Planning that “case studies from countries with different planning systems and practice in very important, since the existing debates on urban policies, urban form and resilient urban systems are still far from being well developed”. The assessment of Beirut’s follows the seven fundamental stages of the RTP model. Stage 1 (identification of key territorial issues) was explained in section 2.1 and 2.2 regarding the sensitive location of the district, its historical fabric and the degree of destruction reflected to it according to the field investigation. Stage 2 (selection of relevant planning documents) included the explanation of the master plan in the section 3.2. As for stage 3 (identification of resilience-related policies and measures), along with the attempt of the planners to maintain the connection of the district with its environment (i.e. The Mediterranean Sea), it might be noticed that the planners knew that there must be a role for the redevelopment project in the healing process of the city. According to Gavin - leader of the consultants’ planning team- “In the renewal of the great city squares and the making of new public spaces, it must provide a social arena and a means to reconnect a once-divided city”(Gavin and Maluf 1996). In the case of the redevelopment of Beirut, the Recovery attribute was chosen in stage 4 (selection of appropriate resilience attributes) to assess the process of restoration of the district after fifteen years of civil war. Stage 5(formulation of the evaluation questions) proposed questions about the role of the project in enhancing the capacity for the city to recover from disturbances. But since recovery has different aspects, stage 6 (selection of the dimensions of resilience and corresponding indicators) deals with recovery on a social and physical level. Even though, researchers have dealt with various issues of the impacts of the project to discuss issues of the identity and modernity, the change of the district after the implementation of the project shows symptoms of recovery in the physical level. As for the social level, although the planners acknowledged that “ since the war, the city has remained socially and psychologically split” and suggested that “ it will be brought back together and will achieve its full role and identity through the reconstruction of a vigorous and lively Central District” (Gavin

and Maluf 1996), some researchers argued that the “recollection of the war itself -the painful but necessary process of social healing- is what the urban planners and architects neglected to respond to” (Sarkis 2005). In stage 7 (synthesis and critical appraisal of the evaluation results), Beirut after more than two decades since the end of the civil war has made major steps towards recovery on the physical form. However, it could be argued that the contribution of the project towards social recovery might not be to the same degree of the physical one.

## CONCLUSION

The footprints of the conflicts of The Lebanese Civil War is still existing until today, not only through the bullets’ holes that are remaining in many buildings around Beirut, but also in the economy, services and of course the memory of the Lebanese people. Since Lebanon is in a disaster-prone region, it was important to examine whether or not the post-conflict development project helped in creating resilient community in Lebanon which is “structurally organized to minimise the effects of disasters” (Tobin 1999) in case future disturbances take place. Researchers have different opinions about the redevelopment of Beirut, and some of them might consider it an “impressionistic collage of the past” (Vale and Campanella 2005). However, it could be argued that its central district has made major recovery step on the physical form after the destruction but on the social form it might need work to enhance the resilience of the city. However, It is also important to mention that resilience itself is not a state but rather a process, in other words “urban resilience can be regarded as a guiding principle rather than an end state” (Ta an-Kok et al. 2013). Therefore, resilience in urban planning might be considered as a direction instead of a goal.

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## BEIRUT'S PERI-URBAN CONTESTATIONS: STREETS AS BORDERS AND PUBLIC SOLACE

**WISSAM MANSOUR and CHRISTINE MADY**

Notre Dame University Louaize Lebanon.

E: [wmansour@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:wmansour@ndu.edu.lb), and [christine.mady@ndu.edu.lb](mailto:christine.mady@ndu.edu.lb)

### ABSTRACT

This paper rethinks and disseminates a contribution to the CS2 under the 'contested areas and streets as border conditions' theme within a study area at the urban periphery of Beirut. The conceptual framework underpinning this research investigates polarized relations within urban, and peri-urban contexts such as the private and the public, nature and the built environment, heritage and war. The research identifies contestations within the contexts where these relations are found and problematized. We also question whether severed polarizations are reconcilable and whether streets retain the resilience to offer such solace. The investigation is conducted through area specific analyses of historical and morphological conditions to identify the impact of colonial planning, modernism, and the influence of war in the creation of contested conditions. Within conditions of conflict and insecurity, the different roles that open urban spaces play towards the creation of more resilient environments are addressed. Research conclusions are presented through projects of an architectural design studio, proposing design strategies to mitigate identified contested spaces and borders.

### KEYWORDS

Borders, contestations, Beirut, Badaro, Furn El-Chebbak



## INTRODUCTION

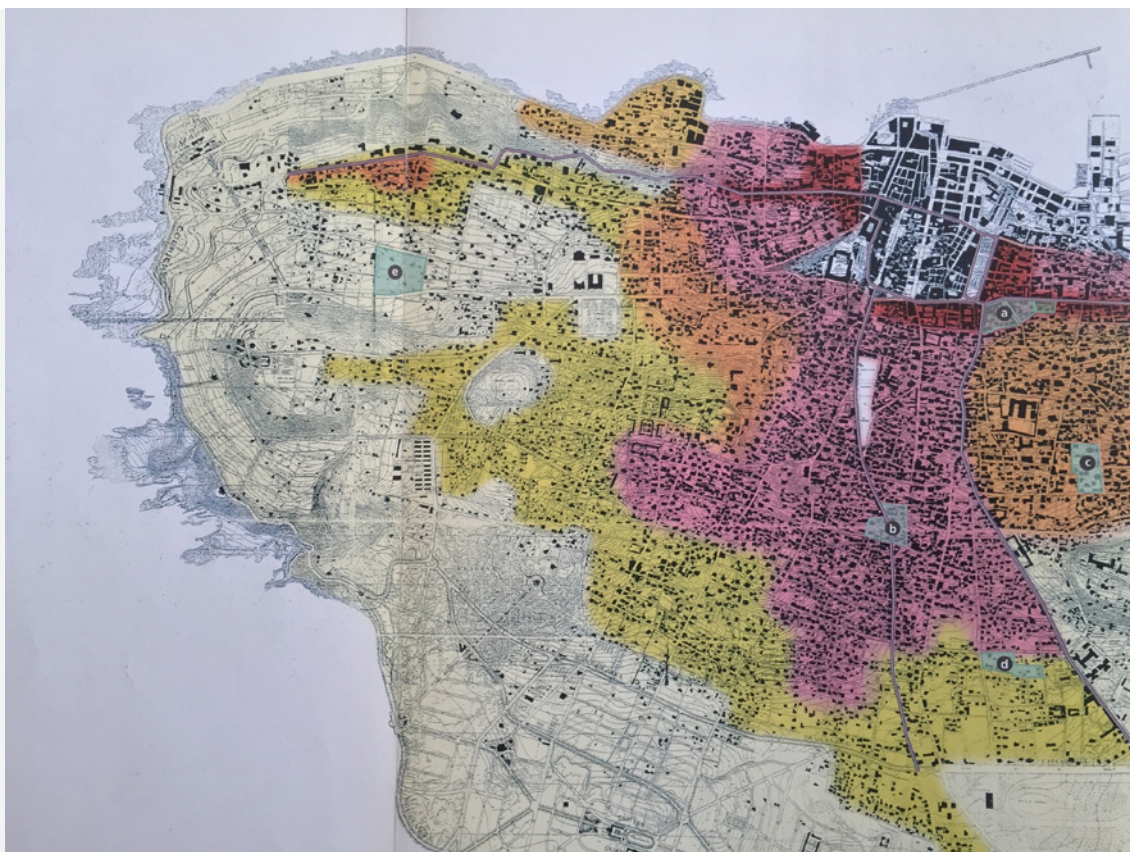
Badaro and Furn El-Chebbak are two areas within the urban periphery of administrative Beirut, the first within, and the second beyond this periphery. They exhibit morphological overlaps inherent to various periods of development including but not limited to French mandate, modernism, the war, and post war periods. While urbanization has significantly transformed both the urban and the sub-urban realms in greater Beirut, these peri-urban areas proved resistant to urban change despite urban growth, and the introduction of new planning regulations due to many reasons that this paper will attempt to study. The temporally cumulative natural and infrastructure borders within and around these two peri-urban areas together with their transformations, account for one of these reasons. Other reasons include the civil war and its impact on these areas, and the war inherent demarcation line, which may also be considered as one of the above mentioned border conditions that helped preserve a particular peri-urban identity at the edges of the city of Beirut, albeit through different formal, spatial and social modes. The resultant morphological juxtapositions will be the focus of this paper; they will be studied while showing how over time, the peri-urban realm in Beirut has shifted geographically until it has coalesced into its current morphological and social identity, with its latent contestations and border conditions. The research asks whether public space under such conditions could remedy severed polarities that once existed in the area like commercial and residential mixture, nature integration within the built fabric, and the way of life to which this fabric corresponded. Furthermore, it will be asked whether the peri-urban in Beirut as such escapes the 'nagging dissonance between conceived and lived space' that Samir Khalaf claims as a gripping characteristic of Beirut's urban life where urban space assumes a life of its own separate from its original expectations through planning and morphological transformations (Khalaf 2006, p.23).

## BEIRUT'S SHIFTING PERI-URBAN REALM THROUGH HISTORY

Beirut's peri-urban identity has undergone gradual development and geographical shifts until it reached its present state. Saliba (1998) in his study of Beirut between 1920 and 1940 accounts for an urban periphery located within present day Ashrafiyeh -Furn El Hayek and Sodeco- bound towards the north by compact urban areas, west Moussaitbe, and south Ras El-Naba'a, by suburban areas, and characterized as peri-urban by evenly spread coarse and fine urban grain (Saliba, 1998) (refer to Figure 1).

Two reasons account for the transformation of the western peri-urban condition in Saliba's study into urban. The first is Beirut's maritime geography towards the north and the west, which acts as a natural limit to the city growth. The second could be traced to the Ottoman period, during which Khalil Pacha, the Wali of Beirut had constructed by 1908 infrastructure buildings like the Ecole des Arts et Metiers in addition to a public garden in Sanayeh. Also prominent in this area is the American University, built in 1871 to succeed the Syrian Protestant College, where it was originally founded in 1866. The latter was built in Zokak El-Blatt, next to the winter residences of the Moutasarrihs of Mount Lebanon and the luxurious residences of the grand Beirut families, a beautiful site that had dominated the old city (Debbas, 1986: p143). These colleges and other missionary hospitals and consulates became infrastructure nodes around which urbanization would thrive, eradicating their peri-urban status. For these two reasons, the western peri-urban condition became urban.

This condition was not the same towards the east and south of nineteenth century Beirut. There, in the Ashrafiyeh hill, the luxurious houses and the verdant areas would remain, unlike those in Zokak El-Blatt and Moussaitbe areas, characteristic of a peri-urban condition to Beirut until the urbanization of Ashrafiyeh during and after the Lebanese civil war, which transformed Beirut into a polycentric city with Ashrafiyeh growing into a new center. Debbas marks the beginning of countryside along Damascus Road at the level of Ashrafiyeh Street: 'C'est déjà la campagne' (1986, p. 161). The cemeteries along Damascus Road mark this edge in the city. To the south, the Faculty of Medicine of the Saint-Joseph University, which was until 1910 confined to Huvelin Street would relocate and further expand towards the vicinity of the Hippodrome along Damascus Road.

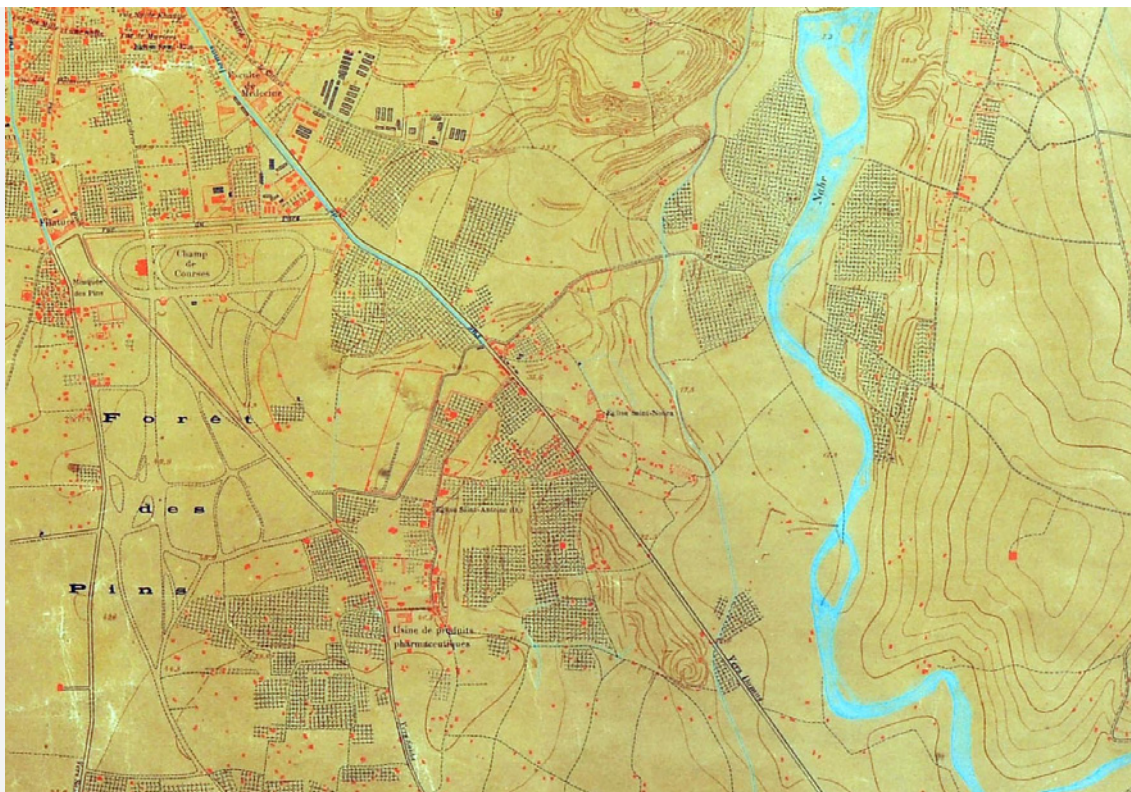


**Figure 1:** Beirut 1930, Patterns of residential growth (Saliba, and Assaf, 1998pp.14-15. [Patterns: a: Urban, b&c: Peri-Urban, d: Sub-urban, e: Rural])

Saliba's (1998) study of the growth patterns in Beirut, based on the 1932 Danger Plan, marks merely rural presence in Furn El-Chebbak and Badaro during that period (see Figure 1). The Hills of Ashrafiyeh and Basta marked the peri-urban edge of Beirut until then, with residential density receding along the southern edges of Mar Elias to give way to natural areas and to the suburban village of Mazraa (Debbas, 1986: p152). The Pine Forest dominated the study areas back then, with Damascus Road and Sidon Road traversing dense pine landscape as reflected in photographic documentation (Debbas, 1986: p160). A 1922 map of Beirut by the Bureau Topographique de l'Armée Française du Levant further confirms the peri-urban limits described by Saliba and Debbas, showing the newly French established Hippodrome to the north of the pine forest as a barrier for growth into the Badaro area, save for the Pine Palace to the west of the Hippodrome, and some other residential garden houses around the neighboring pine mosque further west (see Figure 2). The same map shows garden houses around churches in Furn El-



Chebbak and other developments along Damascus Road. According to a 1936 map of Beirut further development to the north and west of the Pine Forest with development in Badaro was restricted to projects including the French military quarters next to the Hippodrome, the national museum (completed in 1937), the Syriac Catholic Archbishopric and a Tramway depot right next to it along Damascus Road.



**Figure 2:** Beirut Map (1922), Bureau Topographique de l'Armée Française du Levant.

In Furn El-Chebbak further development took place on either side of Damascus Road, arrested east by the Chemin De Fer railway introduced during the Ottoman period. Between the railway and the Beirut River further east verdant agricultural land including few garden houses remain until today. The structure that houses today the Lebanese University Institute of Fine Arts IBA2 also features in this 1936 map in addition to a further development in the morphology of the streets in Furn El-Chebbak, which bifurcate to either side of Damascus Road creating residential neighborhoods of a transitional pre-modern architecture style with French influence, such as the Moudawar Street neighborhood to the north, the area around the Saint Antoine Church and the diagonal road leading from Damascus Road to St. Nohra Church and present day Tahwita (see Figure 2). The street pattern, and Damascus road persist alongside the Elias Hrawi highway, introduced in the 1990s, which separates the Tahwita area from Furn el Chebbak, further stopping its growth and completing its isolation. Many of the interventions proposed in the CS2 workshop aim to establish strategic linkages between the now isolated Tahwita area and Furn El Chebbak. Prior to presenting the methodology within this design workshop, which led to such design decisions, an overview of the planning history in the study area is presented in the following.

## COLONIAL PLANNING AND MODERNISM

Three urban planning periods are distinguished within this paper. The first period for urban planning in Beirut started towards the end of the nineteenth century with Ottoman reforms, and an emphasis on 'modernizing' Beirut (Hanssen, 2005). This included the introduction of public transport in the city with tramway lines, passenger and freight trains, the waterfront promenade known as the Corniche, and some public parks within Beirut. Regarding the study area, it is the transportation infrastructure from that period that left traces.

The second period for urban planning in Beirut was further guided by French planners, first the Danger brothers, and then Ecochard, but also the missions from IRFED. This resulted in proposals based on French planning principles, including the star-shaped layout at the city center, to provide a new city image for the newborn Lebanese state. At that time, the study area in both parts: Badaro and Furn el Chebbak was too peripheral to planning decisions. Nevertheless, French mandate architectural typologies emerged in the study area similar to other parts of the city. Prominent buildings include the Pine palace within the Hippodrome also set by the French in its current location, the USJ University along Damascus Road, several French schools scattered in the area, the French cemetery that was connected through the pine forest to the French military barracks and hospital located in the Badaro area. Furn El Chebbak, having developed along Damascus Road, included a customs building, Khan, and tobacco factory. Business owners or workers settled in the area as a result.

The third period is marked by the modernist approach to planning, again under the guidance of Ecochard. However, in this approach, Lebanese authorities only executed transportation infrastructure projects, and established land exploitation zoning (Salam, 1998) within a physical approach to planning, which disregarded the specificities and needs of each area within the city. The state favored entrepreneurial development as part of its free market economy. Add to this the bank secrecy policy, which attracted regional investment to the country, and mainly its capital city. In the 1950s, Beirut witnessed a financial boom, accompanied by real estate development. Two important ones were the area of Hamra Street, and that of Badaro Street, both developed with foreign Arab investment. Another planning aspect worth mentioning is the taming of the Beirut River corridor, converting it from a natural to a concrete border in the city, dividing the fabric on both river banks.

Drawing on this overview, we highlight some contestations resulting from the planning approaches and influences within the study area. These are further verified through students' research work on the area. Already the French quarters resulted in exclusive areas, accessible to selected people rather than the general public. Damascus Road already formed a border in the city, even before the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. Also, the decision of the state to selectively execute some of Ecochard's road network resulted in dissecting intricate urban fabric that was either existing or grew over time. This resulted in severing areas that were morphologically connected, and in turn affected everyday life in those areas. Examples include the Sami El-Solh Avenue, Abdallah el Yafi Avenue, and the Elias Hrawi highway. Also, the Beirut River became a barrier separating administrative Beirut, from its 'poorer' surroundings such as the Tahwita area in Furn El-Chebbak or the adjacent municipality of Sin el Fil. This implied that the heritage in the area was contested, and often isolated in pockets thus de-contextualizing it.

Another dimension influencing contestations in the area are population dynamics that contributed to the influx of inhabitants from different backgrounds, namely Arab nationals, and Lebanese inhabitants from outside the capital city.

## **WAR AND PUBLIC SPACE IN PERI-URBAN BEIRUT**

During the civil war, Badaro and Furn El-Chebbak were encapsulated. Protected by the pine forest in the west, which became no-man's land, and by the natural borders and natural social extensions of the east and south. These areas were encapsulated in time, and mostly preserved except for war traces along the Sami El-Solh Road. As such, war was mostly of a preserving effect on the level of the built environment.

The real war the area witnessed was waged on its natural areas, especially on the pine forest, with effects reaching beyond the disintegration of the natural within the urban to the disruption of a nature related way of life. The area of Badaro is next to the largest public space in Beirut (Shayya, 2010) with an area of about 300000 m<sup>2</sup>. Events, promenades, music and contests entertained the life of the residents of the areas surrounding the pine forest, Footpaths traversed it, some leading to the French hospital and barracks but also cemeteries. The war not only burnt down the forest, but also resulted in post-war decisions to confine it within highways. Accessibility to the forest was limited, and its closure to the public for 45 years meant that it became a gap in the memory of the urbanites.

Furn El-Chebbak's pre-war public spaces are local, serving the neighborhood scale. They do not exceed the casual pocket garden, or abandoned lot on which greenery emerges. Efforts by the municipality to introduce green spaces and sports grounds however has slightly ameliorated the situation. The case of Furn El-Chebbak does not differ from urban areas/ districts within Beirut, with the low rate of open space per inhabitant resulting from a history of neglect of the importance of open spaces. In this respect, the Tahwita area with its proximity to Furn El-Chebbak and to Beirut River represents an equally vital natural space for the municipalities surrounding it, yet it is threatened today by private development rather than being invested in ameliorating public life.

With respect to the damage war inflicted on space, the first public spaces affected by the war were the streets connecting the vital parts of the city. In the war period, the area was marked by several checkpoints. Scars of fighting across political groups are still evident on the facades of buildings on main roads, namely Sami el Solh, and more so to the south towards the Tayouneh roundabout, where exposure of two contrasting neighborhoods is maximized. Morphology seems to play a role regarding the vulnerability of public space in times of war, which in its turn augmented the pre-war divides that existed between the different parts of the study area and their surroundings. Little beyond private development has been done towards stitching urban tissue that was probably not as severed by war, as much as by the development time war took away from its life. The deterioration of public transport is another factor affecting the accessibility and the life in public space, including streets.

No matter what the wars that may be illustrated in contestations within the area, public space and the longevity of qualitative polarizations within the public realm remain the common objects of these waged wars. Heritage is equally outside a healthy relationship with preservation. Against such a condition, the workshop researches the possibility of repolarization through space and the intricate associations that a space could engage with.



## WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The theme of the workshop is ‘urban connectivity in border conditions and contested spaces’. Based on a theoretical framework that investigates polarities and their juxtaposition within the study area, the design workshop started with an understanding of four themes that would guide the analysis, strategic proposal for the area, and the architectural interventions responding to the proposals to mitigate border conditions in contested areas. Students were introduced to the study area through numerous visits, available literature and visual documentation. In the first project phase students were asked to research the area, and to identify borders and contestations. In the second phase, students would propose an intervention strategy to mitigate one or more of their identified contestations and borders. In the third phase, students would elaborate an architectural program, and develop an architecture project on a selected site. Over one semester students worked on the Mat’haf-Badaro area, and in the next semester on the adjacent Furn El-Chebbak area. The following sections present the four themes underpinning the workshop’s investigation, and the students’ reading of the area through the lens of these themes.

## PERI-URBAN BORDERS AND CONTESTATIONS

This paper investigates the impact of urbanization, colonial planning, modernism and war on the creation of contested areas and border conditions. While some of these borders are evidently inherent from such a palimpsest, which is explored in the previous section in the way colonial infrastructure development contributed to shifting and eventually marking peri-urban limits to the city, the same borders today are questionable as limits to severed relationships between different parts of the study area on many levels. Within the framework of this study, we identify four levels: socio-cultural, natural, commercial and residential, and lastly heritage.

### Urban areas and socio-cultural borders

The first severed level is the social, where the relations of the study area with its surroundings, and the relationships of its parts on the neighborhood level, seem to be disengaged, or socially discontinuous. The social and religious mixture that predated the civil war in Beirut no longer characterizes social life, especially along severed borders like the ones along the demarcation line, where divides are most pronounced, and remain as mental scars even if they are physically not evident (Bollens, 2012). This has been reinforced in the study area by certain morphological elements. Together with the particular way in which the demarcation line cuts into the study area from the Tayyouneh roundabout along the Sami El-Solh Avenue, and up north along Damascus Road, these morphological elements restricted the rapid urbanization of the area. This led to slow urbanization and a densification of parts of the area, especially in Furn El-Chebbak.

The result of this growth pattern is the coexistence of different types of community units ranging from natural to neighborhood to regional center developments. This means that at close proximities, the transition from rural, to sub-urban to peri-urban and urban life in the study area is spatially abrupt. This is evident in the frequent border conditions like the Elias Hrawi highway, which separates a rural-like life in Tahwita from the traditional neighborhood developments in Furn El-Chebbak and their way of life, although this too is disappearing today to make way for more urban development types, as we shall see.

The once consistent morphological and social aspect of Tahwita and Furn El-Chebbak is now divided and further transformed due to sprawl from Ashrafiyeh.

Despite the mixed character of developments in the study area, a general traditional neighborhood development persists, whether it is modern in Badaro, or transitional Lebanese of French influence in Furn El-Chebbak. The social character of the area equally reflects this traditional neighborhood development where a local sense permeates the area, but is as discontinuous as the development types and equally challenged by gentrification. These morphological and social discontinuities, reinforced by the linearity of Damascus Road that further fragments the homogeneity of neighborhoods that flank it in Furn El-Chebbak, deprive the urban periphery of Beirut from a center. With no socio-spatial heart, the area seems to lack a rapport between spatial and social identities. Other than the churches around which the initial settlements started, and the pedestrian unfriendly streets, there are few places to identify with.

### **Natural versus urban borders**

The second level of contestations is that between the urban and the natural where the remaining green areas in their various scales are unused by residents due to the material, morphological and political limits introduced between them and the neighborhoods. In this respect, the inaccessibility of the pine forest during the civil war (since 1975), and its closure since its partial rehabilitation after the damage that ensued from the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982 are major conditions that together with the walls, fences and surrounding avenues reduce the accessibility to this urban park to merely visual for the immediate residents.

Another major natural area is the agricultural land along the Beirut River and other discontinuous remnants of the pine forest in the Tahwita area, which are entirely separated from their surroundings by the Emile Lahoud Highway and the Beirut River from the, Corniche El-Nahr from the north, and Elias Hrawi highway, which disconnects a whole neighborhood in the Tahwita area; note that this area was historically and morphologically an integral part of the south eastern development of Furn El-Chebbak.

On the micro scale of natural integration, in Badaro and especially in Furn El-Chebbak where rural development consisted then of houses with front gardens and surrounding agricultural land still offer small scale green patches, but are unfortunately suffocated by vehicular traffic and lack projects that consolidate them as assets to neighborhood wellbeing and urban quality of life.

Whether considered rural remnants or essential elements of a peri-urban context, the various scales of manifested nature within the study area remain today part of a rare transition between Beirut and the Lebanese mountains. Khalaf recognizes the proximity of city and mountain within the urban context of Beirut as a constituting element in the urban identity of Beirut (Khalaf 2006).

With the peri-urban quickly by-passed, the ideological dreams of a marriage between the trading communities in Beirut and the homogeneous rural communities in Mount Lebanon have scarce meeting room, which for Khalaf accounts for a feature that informs the way Beirut's public sphere transcends what is beyond its ability to mobilize and forge a hybrid culture for tolerance and coexistence (Khalaf 2006). Khalaf, nevertheless, acknowledges a certain 'ruralization' of Beirut in the form of non-urban ties and loyalties that further problematizes the seeming tension between the urban and rural identities of city and mountain. He notes a weak relationship between urbanization in Beirut as a physical phenomenon and the correspondence of an urban way of life to such urbanization (Khalaf 2006, p 26).

In this respect, it is questionable that the peri-urban setting under consideration is any different from the urban neighborhoods, which today remain largely 'more a "mosaic" of distinct urban communities than a "melting pot" of amorphous urban masses' as Khalaf suggests, especially in its ability to obstruct rational urban planning and zoning (Khalaf 2006, p 26). What the urbanization of the study area threatens then is its particular position at the periphery of the city, which together with the natural areas that reinforce this peri-urban character, remains to date free from the social, economic and the urban tensions that prevail the urban center of Beirut, and the social homogeneity of its dense suburbs. As such the area represents a repository of architectural and natural heritage with observed contestations, yet with prospects for preserving an important socio-spatial reality in the dissonant, yet strangely complementary city and mountain duality in Lebanon.

### **Commercial versus residential characters**

A third contestation level consists of a competition between commercial strips along Badaro Street, Sami El-Solh Avenue, and Damascus Road on the one hand, and the residential neighborhoods bordering them on the other, including the emergence of larger scale commercial developments at the northern and southern extremities of Damascus Road within Furn El-Chebbak. Shopping typologies other than the high street include medium scale commercial centers that failed to offer an alternative shopping experience to the historical commercial strip along Damascus Road, and other large scale malls like the City Center mall, which together with the infrastructural network that lends it its good accessibility severe the urban fabric they traverse. These commercial scales with their failures and relative success are signs of an ad hoc approach to commercial development in the commercial context of Damascus Road. They do not consider an urban design approach to the important relationship between the commercial and the residential within traditional neighborhood development. Such developments ignore the necessity and advantages of the integration of commercial developments within larger mixed-use neighborhoods and a sustainable living/working environment. Projects like Isocele and the Titan<sup>1</sup> are predominantly commercial developments that are invasive in their introduction of an urban core scale into their peri-urban context.

Meanwhile, in the Tahwita area new developments introduce a scale that continues urban sprawl, resembling contemporary real estate residential development from the Ashrafiyeh hill to the north, which is larger than the peri-urban medium grain that exists in Furn El-Chebbak. These developments take advantage of the relatively low real estate prices in the derelict industrial area to gentrify it, claiming the introduction of a new area character to Tahwita. The area is foreseen as becoming a Soho area where Artists live and work in Lofts and studios inspired by the industrial and commercial context that exists to the north eastern part of Tahwita where factories coexist today with the former railway station, clubs and art spaces like Beirut Art Center and Ashkal Alwan-The Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts. While the latter type of development is inspired by existing morphological and historical conditions, and the former type ignores these conditions, they both illustrate a scenario of a peripheral development that threatens the relatively stable peri-urban center.

What this scenario threatens is the cultural diversity that was introduced by new higher institutions to the predominantly rural area character. When the commercial character along Damascus Road is concerned, these particularly dense real estate developments undermine the primacy of the street that characterized the commercial identity along

<sup>1</sup> See the two projects at: [http://trilliumdevelopment.com.lb/td/overview.php?id\\_parent=259](http://trilliumdevelopment.com.lb/td/overview.php?id_parent=259) and [http://trilliumdevelopment.com.lb/td/overview.php?id\\_parent=272](http://trilliumdevelopment.com.lb/td/overview.php?id_parent=272)

Damascus Road. While this commercial strip had expanded once into the area's periphery, and grown into larger scale commercial spaces, now peripheral real estate developments threaten to implode the special commercial identity of the strip especially when the residential and the commercial mixture on the one hand, and the primacy of commerce to streets on the other hand are concerned.

This particular mixed-use identity that Damascus Road historically lent to Furn El-Chebbak is undermined today. Comparatively, gentrification transforms Badaro Street into a lively street hosting daytime and night activities, in addition to occasional street festivals, enhancing the existing mixed-use character of the street. Until a major transformation in the mixed-use nature of Damascus Road and Badaro Street remain, they are both still able to offer experiential urban values albeit under considerable mobility limitations and existing contestations and challenges.

### **Heritage versus urban sprawl**

Heritage is understood as the cultural and historical resources that a society inherits, relates to and tries to maintain in the present, but also propagate for future generations (Kalman, 2014). Within a multicultural context affected by colonialism, modernism, war and reconstruction, tracing what heritage refers to is rather complex. Within a social context, we could also refer to cultural heritage as defined by UNESCO in 1989 and reinterpreted afterwards. In its broad sense, cultural heritage refers to material and immaterial resources reflecting an identity both tangibly and intangibly. Three categories of heritage are identified (Kalman, 2014: p. 12): movable, immovable and intangible, where the immovable and intangible are explored within the study area.

The study area is rich in history, and the stories of different populations traversing or settling in it. This history and its preservation in collective memory are understood as heritage. Places that have acquired meaning pertain to immovable heritage. These include manmade and natural features such as buildings, squares, roads, rivers, waterfronts and landscapes. In the study area little rose to such an immovable heritage. However, a rich building stock, certain cultural and institutional buildings, the pine forest easily qualify as such an immovable heritage. Also the use of natural features, in this case the Beirut River or the Pine forest, by different people renders them cultural heritage that becomes significant first to recognize and then to maintain or manage.

Intangible heritage includes 'traditions and living expressions inherited from our ancestors' (Kalman, 2014: p17) as well as knowledge, instruments, techniques that specific communities used, and passed onto next generations. Rituals, festive events, crafts, dance, folklore falls within this category (Kalman, 2014). In this respect, many of the activities that emerged in the pine forest constitute intangible cultural heritage that is inaccessible today. Some of these events that took place within the pine forest included the daily promenades of the residents of Mazra'a and Basta in the public garden of the forest, the music performances that happened at the music Kiosk in the garden, which was installed at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Archery contests in the forest and at the Pigeon Club in present day Tahwita, and the racing events at the Hippodrome next to the Cercle Du Parc casino and Palace which became the fortified French Residence des Pin since July 1920. All these events gradually disappeared as the spaces that housed them were urbanized, privatized, or closed to public use. To this category also belongs the shopping experience of Damascus Road, which is threatened by street unfriendly commercial developments, and the harmony between the way of life and the forms of development that enabled it.

Kalman (2014) explains how the understanding of heritage moved from the physical to the social, material to immaterial, elitist to mundane, unique to diverse, hence generating contestations over what is considered as having a heritage value. The ACA's (Arab Center for Architecture) recent interest in the area and in architectural tours in Badaro and in Furn EL-Chebbak is an initiative to draw an attention to the tangible and intangible heritage in the area, while other initiatives such as APSAD (The Association for The Protection of Natural Sites and Old Buildings in Lebanon) emphasizes the conservation of Architecture and Nature as conducive of such a cultural heritage preservation. Little beyond this scope is observed towards recognition of socio-cultural practices of collective value or towards linking them to tangible heritage.

In the absence of heritage planning guiding the development of the city, this study attempts to draw a picture of the existing heritage in the study area as evidenced through the work of students during the design studio. Maintaining and/ or reinstating the character of the area was a prominent concern for students in the studios as will be elaborated later. One approach to prolong the presence of this heritage (in its various forms and after researching it) is to manage change, and its coexistence with booming real estate development. As highlighted above, this real estate boom in the form of 'signature' buildings by Lebanese 'starchitects' are being constructed on both sides of the river, gentrifying the area and changing its land use from rural, industrial and transportation-based to high end, 'artistic' quarters, similar to what is happening in the gentrified area of the Beirut port.

Other factors that contributed to a loss of heritage are the disappearance of the tramway and its importance in stitching the social fabric of the area together with that of the city, and the current dominance of cars within residential neighborhoods. Especially in Furn El-Chebbak, alternatives to the regional train, namely the Elias Hrawi highway and Emile Lahoud Highway as mentioned above contributed to the separation of traditional neighborhoods that otherwise belonged to the same area. Also among these factors is the exclusion of the buildings that belong to the French mandate period from the public access, as these remain military hospitals and private schools, especially in Badaro along Mathaf Street. Similarly in Furn el-Chebbak some buildings like the IBA2 and other public buildings lack the valorization as heritage buildings and are not considered as prime tangible forms within urban design schemes that relate them to their neighborhood or area contexts.

Finally, after the modern boom in the 1950's, the area was left with significant imprints by Lebanese modernist architects in Badaro, and architecture with wealth evident in residential building along Damascus Road, and on roads stemming from it in Furn le Chebbak. While most of the tangible heritage remains unaffected by war, yet under considerable deterioration due to the lack of conservation initiatives, most of the intangible heritage is lost or threatened.

## **CS2 WORKSHOP: MITIGATING CONTESTED SPACES AND BORDER CONDITIONS**

In relation to the four themes, the above readings can be categorized under the following types of proposed interventions:

### **Addressing culture and society**

Students identified disrupted interactions due to infrastructure and other borders and contestations. These included avenues and highways, but also highly secured activities



such as army points or governmental buildings with high security. The latter isolated or disrupted parts of the urban fabric with residential land uses. Some proposals included turning a contestation into a celebration, such as using walls for young and graffiti artists, improving the quality of sidewalks to increase walkability, using borders as connectors (through active living and non-motorized mobility).

Students also proposed programming for integration across age groups, and different interest groups, and the provision of social infrastructure to attract residents including public spaces, educational, and medical facilities along with office spaces for NGOs. In this case, proposals paid attention to the needs of various age groups, specifically youth (due to the presence of universities in the area), and the elderly (due to a growing elderly population). As part of enhancing social interaction, and through their analysis, students identified footpaths and open spaces currently used by people, which could enhance the connectivity of a pedestrian network, which some proposals also enhanced.

### **Addressing nature**

Students identified underused, and leftover open areas in Furn El-Chebback, which are limiting urban growth, leading to pressure on urban land in other parts. This is equally leading to the reduction in the remaining agricultural land. The first set of interventions examines the possibility of maintaining the agricultural area, and introducing urban farming to meet the needs of the inhabitants as an initial step.

Another approach investigated the potential of networking the Pine Forest and agricultural land as lungs not only for the area but also the city. In between, the identified open urban spaces would establish the link between the two larger open areas at the extremities of the study area.

### **Addressing heritage**

Based on their historical research and their engagement with local community through site research, students identified heritage values, and tried to establish intervention strategies based on the identified significance of that heritage to the area's residents, but also more broadly to Beirut. Students were encouraged to think about the co-presence of old and new within the frame of the four levels of borders, and the aim to mitigate contestations, by reestablishing lost connections whenever possible. Within the proposed interventions, students identified potential stakeholders, and tried to define common interests in their interventions. Guidance was given to consider above all the public good and present a solution that is feasible with respect to existing rules and regulations.

Students' interventions responded to social, economic, and environmental requirements in the area. Maintaining and sometimes reinstating the character of the area was a prominent concern for students in the studios. Note that one approach to prolong the presence of this heritage (in its various forms and after researching it) is to manage change, and its coexistence with booming real estate development, especially in the absence of regulations to manage heritage, and prevent the demolition of buildings or the eradication of heritage sites. One approach was to identify character areas with heritage values prior to proposing interventions in them. For example, students identified 'traditional' social life styles, akin to village life, and social cohesion within sub-areas that need to be preserved.

## Addressing residential and commercial activities

Students presented their concern with the new commercial developments flanking both ends of Damascus Road within the study area, attracting customers from outside the area. They surveyed the type, condition, and extent of commercial activities along Damascus Road and the percentage of closed shops. These changes in economic activity, along with the absence of green open spaces and recreational activities have affected the residential building stock. Some residential buildings are rented, others converted to office spaces. Consequently, the quality of living in the area has deteriorated.

Among the proposed intervention strategies, students indicated that alternative modes of transport are necessary to ameliorate traffic congestion in the area, and cater for emerging development within the existing and limited transportation infrastructure. Students also indicated the necessity for guided development of new properties, to avoid contestations with the existing built environment.

One approach in this case is to revive main streets with ground floor activities that cater for the needs of different users, in contrast to shopping malls that are introverted, and disregard street life. Other proposed projects emphasized the primacy of street level activities as students explored the relation of morphology to socio-economic practices; they designed with the objective of turning spaces into places with a social or a cultural identity reinforcing identified area characters. Also, in terms of residential development, students noted how new residential typologies in Badaro and in Tahwita are threatening the previous lifestyles provided by buildings with open ground floors, green spaces, and niches where socializing takes place, particularly in the isolated Tahwita area.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we presented the area to the southeast of Beirut's city center, which extends on both sides of the former demarcation line, beyond the administrative boundaries of the city. The area is characterized as urban and peri-urban, and has undergone significant changes during various periods starting with the late Ottoman period and its urban planning activities.

The study area is investigated through four categories with the aim of identifying types of borders and contestations that have disrupted polarities within it. Most notable here was the range of severed relations that the natural, social and the architectural have with the built environment and that may well be considered threatened Lebanese heritage whether it is the community way of life, a forest, green patches, or the architecture of the area.

This investigation paves the way to many directions in addressing border conditions in contested areas while using the tools of design and planning but equally relating them to other disciplines. The four themes and their overlaying enabled the students to see the complexity of the context, and the significance of social life, and the social production of space as explained by Lefebvre (1991). Moreover, students were aware of the relation between space production and space management. A synthesis of this investigation highlights the importance of reconsidering a contestation as a celebration, of using urban design interventions to link urban fragments that were previously connected, in order to establish a sense of place; the introduction of city scale programs and local scale activities would engage the local community and reinstate a sense of belonging, but equally valorize the area within its urban context; the introduction of activities for various age groups, and an emphasis on cultural, institutional and communal functions would balance real estate development geared towards consumerism; last but not least, non-motorized mobility is a long term strategy that could support the networking of isolated areas within their urban context.

Finally, we shed light on the proposed interventions by students in a fourth-year architectural design studio to draw attention to the significant valorization of area potential through urban design. While these findings do not amount to an operational response to identified contestations, they pave the way for future research on the role of streets and public spaces leading to public solace.

**Acknowledgement:** the authors would like to thank all the students of the Spring 2016 semester who have participated in this design studio as well as the colleagues involved in following up with the students.

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# TRACK 8

## **T8** STREETS AND URBAN PLACES: URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

Track chair | **Dr. MIAO XU**

Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Campus B,  
Chongqing University

Co-chair | **Dr. WISSAM MANSOUR**

FAAD, NDU

### **DESCRIPTION**

This track discusses the street as a physical interface for urban transformations. The latter will be explored through interdisciplinary perspectives and through paradigmatic shifts, spatial manifestations in the context of design and planning. Castells once defined urban design as the symbolic attempt to express an accepted urban meaning in certain urban forms. Following this line, the track will explore the local street, a traditional and familiar urban form, which presents a highly visible face of local identity. As a multidimensional space of everyday diversity and incubator of cultural heritage, streets have embodied the recent shaping of the city through drastic transformation of de-industrialization, globalization, gentrification, and immigration, as well as the rise of the symbolic economy based on cultural production and consumption. What is the accepted meaning of such urban transformation in local streets? Can the value of local streets be sustained in the 21st century? What we can learn from cross-national cases?

### **KEYWORDS**

Urban transformations, metamorphosis, appropriation, alienation, planned/ unplanned.





# **MORPHOLOGICAL AND MORPHOGENETIC DIVERSITY OF LISBON STREETS. AN INTERPRETATIVE METHODOLOGY**

**SÉRGIO PROENÇA**

University of Lisbon Portugal. E: [sergiobarreirosproenca@gmail.com](mailto:sergiobarreirosproenca@gmail.com)

## **ABSTRACT**

Streets have always played an essential role in the formation of cities, configuring both common and exceptional elements of the urban layout. The seminal role of the street in the creation of the urban artefact is such that some authors claim that without them there would be no city. Although different situations can be integrated in this category of space, resulting the toponymic designations from the morphological richness of the variety of public spaces in Lisbon, we define the street as a linear and continuous morphological element of the public space of the city, at the same time pathway and address, route and place.

It is understood, like many authors who have addressed the subject of urban morphology, that the city can be studied from its shape, thus from the shape of the elements that compose it. It is considered, as a starting point, that the morphological diversity of existing streets in the consolidated and legible fabric of Lisbon that formed over time allows composing a broad and representative corpus of the predominant element in the constitution of the urban fabric of the city, the street.

The dissertation that is the base for this paper defines types of streets representative of the existing morphological and morphogenetic diversity and orders them in a typological framework according to Origin (Topographic situation; Initiative and purpose; Conception; Production) and Form (Urban layout, Cross Section, Partition).

This paper presents the methodology that was used to decompose and interpret the morphological complexity of the Lisbon streets.

## **KEYWORDS**

Street; Lisbon; Typo-morphology

## INTRODUCTORY FRAMING

The dissertation that is the base for this paper is named “The diversity of the street in the city of Lisbon. Morphology and Morphogenesis.” This title reflects the theme, the study object and the approach that was chosen for this research work.

Thus, stemming from the diversity of streets that exist in the consolidated and legible urban fabric of Lisbon, the goal was to create an analytical typo-morphological framework, both descriptive and interpretative of the existing morphological (Form) and morphogenetic (Origin of form) diversity of the predominant element in the constitution of the Lisbon public space - the street.

The usefulness of this typological framework of the Lisbon streets according to Origin (Topographic situation; Initiative and purpose; Conception; Production) and Form (Urban layout, Cross Section, Partition) is to contribute for the theory and methods of Urban Morphology and also to the edification of the city.

### The main question

In the scientific domain of Architecture and Urbanism, both studies and disciplinary answers focus on the composition and edification of space. Therefore, the main questions placed regard on how to design the space with the qualities that are acknowledged in the “city” and are not recognized in the “urban” (Choay, 1994); how to transform the “urban” into “city”; or on how to produce the public space of the city in a way it is legible to both habitants and visitors, i.e., how to design a legible city.

In the present case, the main question to be placed was: What is the lesson Lisbon has to teach us, from the most common element of the public space, for the edification of a legible city?

### The Lisbon streets

From the reading of Aristotle (Aristóteles, 1998) we can infer that, in its essence, two parts compose the city: the private part and the public part.

The public part is the one that we all recognize and share. In the case of the city of Lisbon, the public space allows guiding ourselves and structures the city; its recognizable shape for habitants and visitors allows the legibility of the city (Lynch, 1960) and our identification with its spaces.

The urban layout is understood as a bi-dimensional, black on white, representation of the public space of the city and this abstraction of the public space allows extracting its shape for analytic and comparative purposes. (Figure 1)



**Figure 1:**  
Urban layout  
of the city of  
Lisbon.

The public space is composed by different elements, but in our culture the street is its predominant element, the one that most recurrently is used in the composition of the urban layout, defining the majority of its common elements and yet also configures exceptional and structuring elements of the image of the city.

Although distinct situations may be integrated in this spatial category, we define the street as any element of the public space of the city that constitutes a channel or corridor, linear and continuous, which cumulatively serves the functions of passage and support of buildings. I.e. we understand the street as linear and continuous morphological element of the public space of the city, a cultural product of the society that conforms and appropriates it, and both fulfils the functions of path and address, at the same time an itinerary and a place.

### Hypothesis and method

"The city as a didactic instrument. It is not a question as to whether it should be so. It is rather a matter that it cannot be otherwise." (Rowe and Koetter, 1978)

The agreement with this statement from *Collage City* allows us to formulate the hypothesis that there are principles for the creation of the streets of a city that sedimented over time and is formally diverse, such as Lisbon, and that these principles may be inferred from the very elements that they gave origin.

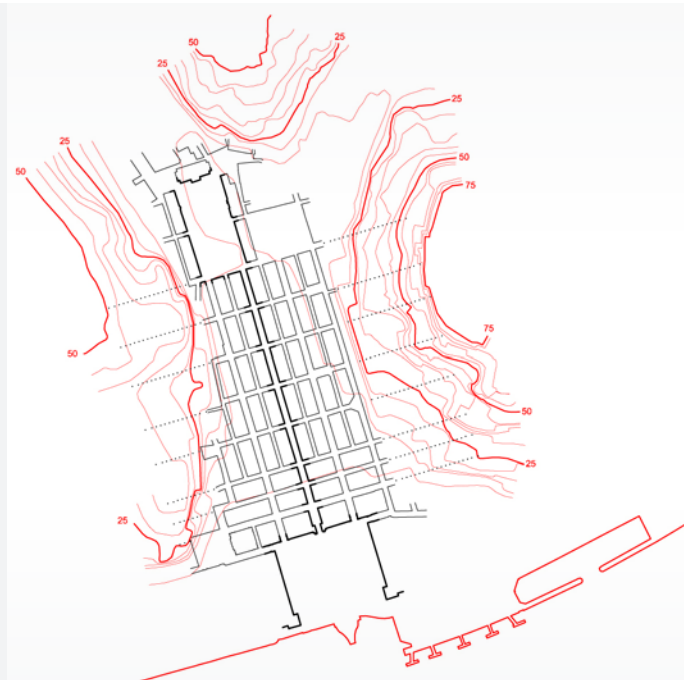
The city may be studied from its form and the streets of Lisbon are the very study objects that allow us to discover the composition principles of their type<sup>1</sup>, and these may be synthesized on a typological framework of the morphology and morphogenesis of Lisbon streets. As Anne Vernez Moudon tells us, the development of a typo-morphology is an economical mean to show the diversity that we wish to study and explain, while building an operative instrument. (Moudon, 1994)

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<sup>1</sup> Argan considers the type "the interior structure of a form or... a principle which contains the possibility of infinite formal variations and further modification of the type itself" (Argan, 1963).

The role of the analytical and interpretative drawing in the understanding and decoding of the form of the street was essential, regarding both its relation with the classification themes and the typological classification, and lastly for its intelligible transmission. Thus, drawing consists in part of the argumentation and was used as an essential part of the methodology, enabling for instance the strata decomposition that allows to place in evidence formal configurations and relations that not always are perceived in the complexity of the reality.

For example the overlapping of the urban layout and the topography strata allows to identify the limits for the application of the straight lines on preconceived urban compositions, such as in the Pombalina Baixa (Figure 2), or the generative role of some topographical features, such as the valley line that generates the layout of Rua de São Bento. (Figure 3)

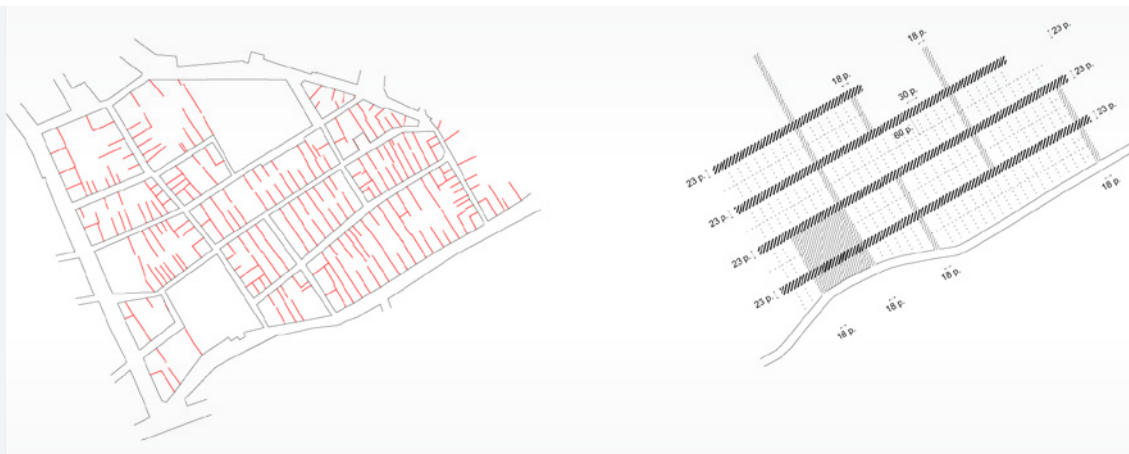


**Figure 2:**  
Urban layout and  
topography of Baixa  
Pombalina

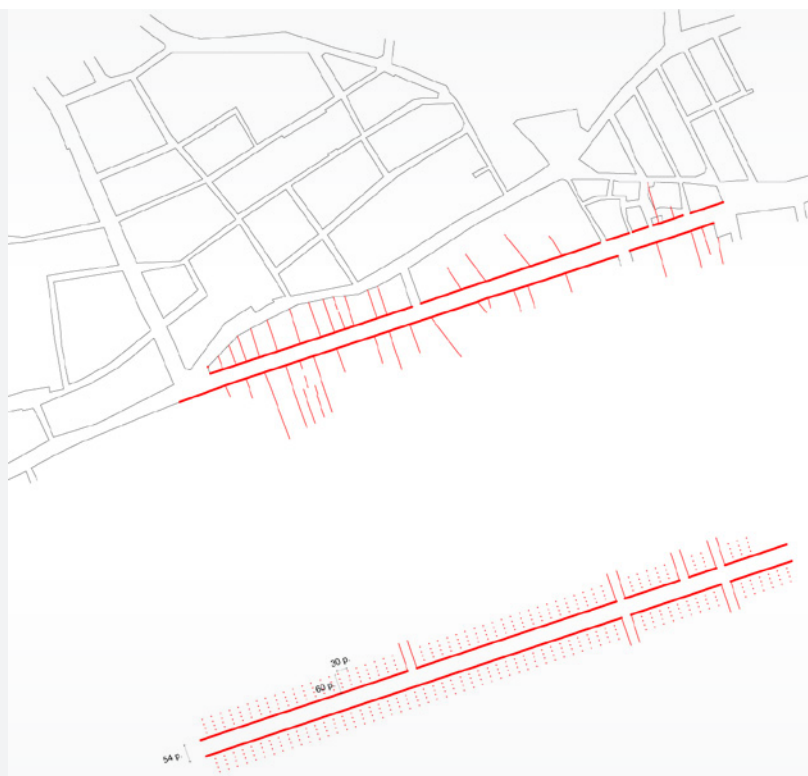


**Figure 3:**  
Topography of São  
Bento valley and  
urban layout of Rua  
de São Bento and  
Avenida D. Carlos I

The isolation of the urban layout and the plot structure allows to infer the composition matrix that existed originally in urban fabrics where nowadays it is not as clear, for instance in Madragoa, (Figure 4) or in singular morphological elements such as Calçada do Marquês de Abrantes, (Figure 5) deducing the composition principles that regulated its formation.

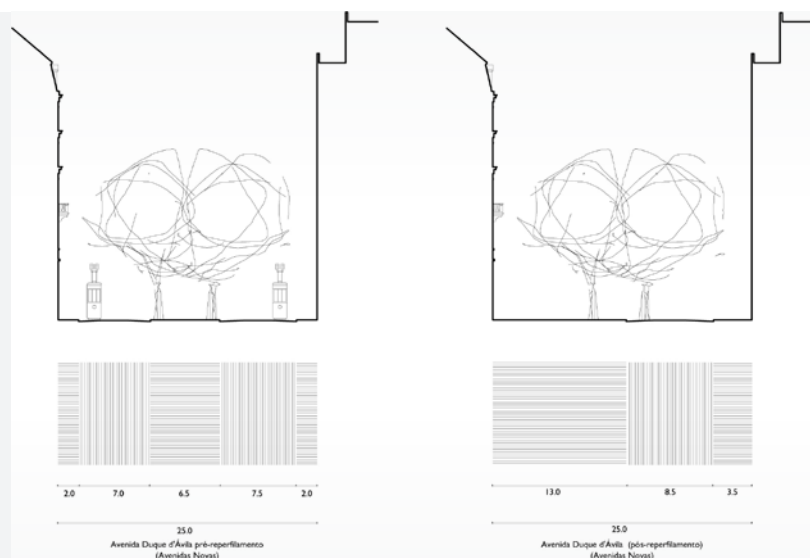


**Figure 4:**  
Urban layout and plot structure vs. Composition matrix of Madragoa



**Figure 5:**  
Urban layout and plot structure vs. Composition matrix of Calçada do Marquês de Abrantes





**Figure 6:**  
Cross-section  
and partition  
diagram of  
Avenida Duque  
d'Ávila.

Drawing was also used when comparing transversal cross-sections of streets and partition diagrams were drawn to put in evidence continuity and changes between elements or comparing the same element in different moments, such as the case of Avenida Duque d'Ávila before and after the removal of the tram line. (Figure 6)

Although the form of the streets is studied in the present moment, the dynamic of the urban object makes that this moment is understood as the result of an urban sedimentation process in the long duration of the city. Therefore, the urban development of the city and the formation of its streets was an essential theme for its initial understanding.

### Dissertation structure - a methodology mirror

The dissertation is structured in three parts that roughly follow the methodological steps of typological analysis, as it is described in *Analyse urbaine* (Panerai, Demorgon and Depaule, 1999), which are preceded by the introduction and the first chapter (Background) where the thematic and methodological universe of the thesis is approached.

Thus the First Part, on The city and its streets, corresponds to the definition and description of the corpus of study. More than an inventory, it consists on a previous classification of these elements regarding two specific themes of Lisbon streets: the cultural and urban development periods that frame their formation and the etymology of their toponymical designation.

The Second and Third Parts constitute the typo-morphological framework with the description of types of streets classified according to seven themes: four regarding the Origin of the street (Topographic situation; Initiative and purpose; Conception; Production) and three regarding the Form of the street (Urban layout, Cross Section, Partition).

In each of these chapters the morphological component of the street was questioned regarding a specific theme, thus underlining its role in the formation and conformation of the street. There is a relative autonomy of each thematic chapter; each one of them has a specific initial thematic and conceptual framing and a final synthesis. Therefore the thesis constitutes itself from chapters with autonomy for the typifying of Lisbon streets but they are articulated in the global structure of the thesis, composing the full typo-morphological framework - an interpretation key for the understanding of the Origin and the Form of Lisbon streets.

The choice of the themes for the typological classification of the streets stemmed directly from an understanding of the decomposition of the Origin and of the Form.

The Origin of the form of the street may be explained from different themes or factors or a combination of a number of them, the choice of four of them considered essential for that explanation are ordered according to the very process of formation and conformation of a street.

Therefore, if the Topographical Situation pre-exists and has an essential role in the generation of the form of the street and the coherence of the urban layout; the difference between the public or private Initiative in the creation of a street is relatively indifferent when compared to the Purpose or the cultural period that frames its creation and edification. In the chapter dedicated to Conception, types of streets are distinguished by the formal idea that pre-exists the street itself (a line, a corridor or an equipped space) and the instruments used to control that conception (layout, plot structure and buildings).

Finally, the typifying of the Production stems from the relation between the new street and the pre-existing urban fabric of the city in the moment of its formation and conformation, defining the production processes of addition, overlapping or sedimentation.

Regarding the Form, considering that the city might be studied from its form, and that a segmented and decomposed approach of the space of the city allows reducing its complexity for analytical and interpretative purposes, the thesis approaches the Form of the street by decomposing it in three components: Layout; Cross-Section; and Partition.

This decomposition of the Form of the street allowed to acknowledge predominant affinities between the Layout and the place that supports it; between the Cross-section and the cultural period that frames the creation or reconfiguration of the street; and between the Partition and the uses or the role determined for the street by the society in each period, being this the most volatile of the three components.

Last, the Final Considerations consist on a reflection on the essential question placed by the thesis that is deeply rooted on the knowledge provided by the development of the typo-morphological framework of the streets of Lisbon.

## **EXAMPLES OF THE APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY**

Considering the limits of this paper and presentation, two themes that place in evidence the specificities of Lisbon streets were chosen to exemplify the used methodology.

The first was developed in the chapter dedicated to the names of the forms of the streets, being one of the starting points for the previous classification and also because the toponymical designation is a cultural expression of the city habitants essential for the spatial recognition of places.

The second consists in an interpretation of the formal regulations that in each moment of the urban evolution conditioned the production of the cross-section of the streets, read through the proportion between the height and the width of the channel that was defined, therefore conditioning the form of the space that was built and appropriated by the society.

## The names of the forms of the streets

Regarding the names of the streets, the focus was on the toponymical designation and not on the toponymical attribute, i.e. on the part of the toponyms that reflect the type of space, the part that accuses the specific and shared characteristics among the diverse elements that share the same designation and from which types of streets may be inferred and aggregated in families or categories. For example on the toponymic plaques of Figure 7 the toponymical designations are: Beco; Travessa; Escadinhas and Arco.



**Figure 7:** Toponymic plaques

## Toponymical diversity and proportion

In Lisbon, the morphological richness of the street translates in the very diversity of existing toponymical designations: there are 27 different official toponymical designations, if we disregard the colloquial, non official, designations that are so common in Lisbon, such as Subida (ascent) which is used to designate an inclined street that has its focus on the higher part.

This diversity is not based on any legislation or official regulation, as opposed to cities like Paris where toponymical designations are less varied and dependent of characteristics such as dimension, section and afforest. In Lisbon these designations are a cultural expression inherited through generations and that allows the acknowledgment of the street identity.

Regarding the quantitative distribution of the toponymical designations in Lisbon, there is a wide majority of Ruas (Streets), over 2000 occurrences in a universe of about 3500 existent toponyms, followed by Travessa (Bystreet), about 360 cases. There are 150 Avenidas (Avenues) and 150 Becos (Alleys), and cases with only one occurrence such as Caracol (Snail) or Costa (Coast).

The predominance in Lisbon of public spaces with the designation Rua underlines its importance and the morphological diversity of the spaces where we find this designation illustrates how wide is its use.

According to Raphael Bluteau (Bluteau, 1712-28) the word Rua derives from the Greek ruo with the same meaning of the Latin fluo and the Portuguese corro, "because through the streets runs the rain water, that falls from the roofs (...) also the one from the wells, and the fountains (...) Also the people run the streets, and each one of them is a stream of the people that goes about their business (...)", finally Bluteau refers that some etymologists also state that the word Rua has the same root as the Latin word ruga (wrinkle). Thus the Portuguese word Rua congregates the notions of motion and linear space, lato sensu and etymologically, we might state that any linear public space is a street: a groove caused by time and motion.

## Type ordination

Methodologically, each toponymical designation was identified and its etymology and meaning for the polis in each period was researched in order to infer a definition from the name of each specific type of street.

This approach according to the origin of the names led to the definition of three large families of toponymical designations: 1.) Topographical Position; 2.) Urban Role or Function; 3.) Form, where the toponyms that reflect the layout may be distinguished from the toponyms that reflect the composition elements.

Of the 27 toponymical designations, four of them might exemplify the characterization done for each one of them, also enabling the description of the used methodology.

Topography plays an essential part on the definition of the urban form of Lisbon and also gives coherence and legibility to the very diversity of the urban layout, which reproduces the hierarchy of the topographical configuration. Perhaps for that reason it is easy to find streets whose designation stems directly from the topographical position.

Costa do Castelo (Figure 8) is a unique toponymical designation in Lisboa. The Portuguese word Costa has its origin on the Latin *costa*, with the meaning of rib, side. By extension it might have the meaning of the side of a hill, a slope.

On a hill, the most efficient path between two points is not a straight line, but a curved and sinuous one that roughly follows the same altimetry points. Therefore the curved layout of the Costa is the mimesis of a contour line of the topography that is dotted by important features such as old gates of the castle wall and widens in the proximity of exceptional buildings or belvederes in specific points where one of the sides opens wide over the landscape.



**Figure 8:** Costa do Castelo. Topography vs. Urban layout.

The role or function of an urban element is sometimes so important for the habitants that it transfers to the name of the element itself; this is also the case of the Vila. Vila has origin in the Latin *villa*, which probably contracted from a diminutive form of *vicus* that has the meaning of row of houses, street or neighbourhood. The villa is a country house associated to agricultural production buildings. Nowadays, the Portuguese “vila”

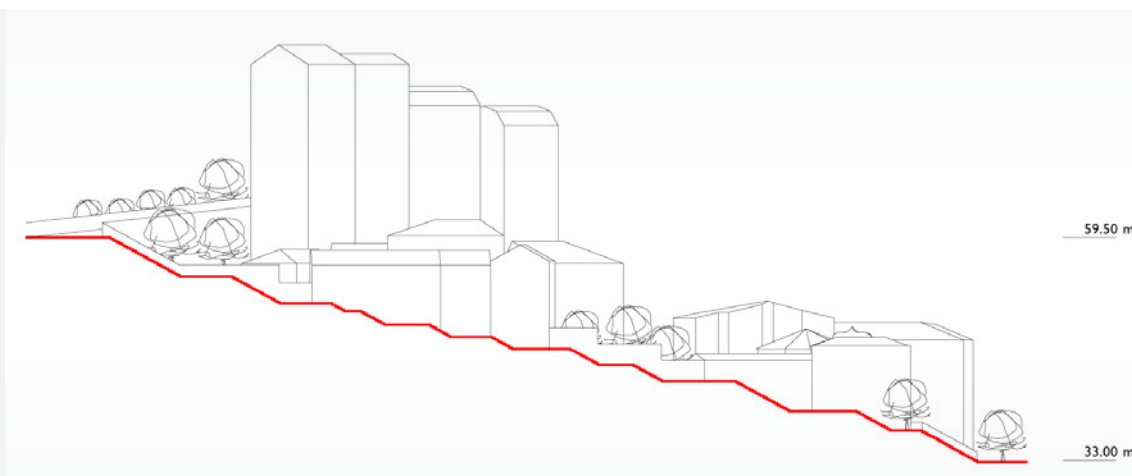
is an urban settlement with a category above “aldeia” (village) and under “cidade” (city), but it may also designate a country house composed both by residential and productive buildings, a meaning that is closer to its etymology.

In the city of Lisbon, Vila designates a specific type of street that has origins on housing operations structured linearly along an open but private axis and promoted by private owners, usually dating from the end of the XIX century and early XX century, created to answer the needs of workers housing and exceptionally dedicated to house the lower bourgeoisie. As time passed by, these initially private streets became part of the public domain although keeping a secondary role on the urban structure.

The third category or family of toponymical types of streets, the names related to the Form, comprehends 16 of the 27 toponymical designations, 6 regarding the form of the layout and 10 regarding the composition elements of the space of the street.

Caracol (snail) is also a synonym of spiral and when it's associated to a street it has the meaning of a street with a zigzag layout.

The Caracol is a very specific case of street that is composed by a succession of linear elements, both ramps and stairs, embedded in the slope of the topography, which inflect one over the other with the goal to link places that are close but with very different altimetry. This is the case of the Caracol da Graça, the single survivor example of the, at least, three cases that existed in Lisbon.



**Figure 9:** Logitudinal section of Escadinhas de São Crispim.

A stair is a series of steps that one may use to climb up or down. Escadinha (small stair) is literally a transposition of the configuration of the ground of the street for its toponymical designation. (Figure 9)

Although in the city of Lisbon there are much more spaces with steps that configure the ground, only 33 Escadinhas exist on the toponymy. Diverging in dimension, layout, urban role and topographical position, the common characteristic is the existence of steps on the ground level of the street. This feature gives the Escadinhas a segregated and secondary role in the urban hierarchy. Their limits are commonly built with housing buildings or closed walls; on the other hand, their space is usually appropriated as a domestical extension of the houses that open up to it, as a consequence of their spatial segregation.

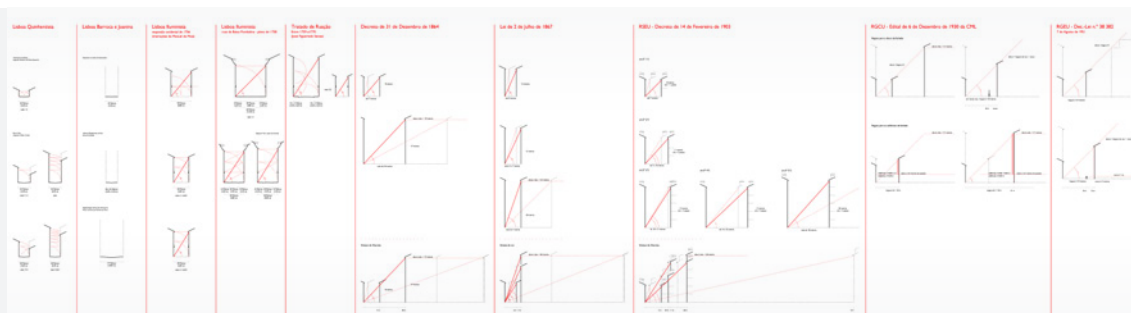


## The importance of toponymical designations

More important than the number and diversity of toponymical designations is the coherence between the designation and the characteristics of the morphological element that is designated. This coherence depends on the urban cultural context in which the binomial element-designation exists and keeping the primordial importance is essential. This is the case of the Avenida da Liberdade, the first with this designation in Lisbon because a new urban configuration needed a new name, an expression of the urban transformation of the city in the second half of the XIX century.

## The proportion of the street cross-section

Regarding the approach to the normative regulations that controlled the proportion of the cross-section of the street, the starting point was the translation of the written regulations in drawings, which allowed an easier interpretation and comparative reading of the 10 essential known sets of regulations between the XVI and the XX century.



**Figure 10:** Street cross-section proportion comparative table.

## The regulations that shaped the cross-section of the street

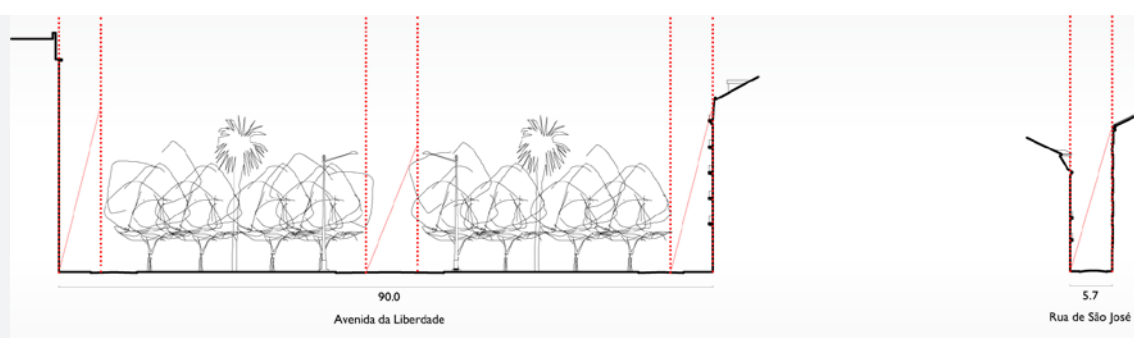
Some of these regulations were inferred from specific operations, such as the ones which informed the XVI century urban operations of Vila Nova de Andrade and the Bairro Alto, although the sedimentation process of these urban fabrics led to its densification and consequent change of the street cross-section as we know it.

Other regulations were only theoretical exercises never applied as intended by their authors, such as the one present in the XVIII century *Tratado de Ruação* by José Figueiredo de Seixas. Nevertheless it was informed by the normative created by the Casa do Risco for both the western expansion of Lisbon and the rebuilt of the Baixa, namely the proportion of the Travessas (bystreets).

From the XIX century onwards, the normative regarding the conformation of the cross-section of the streets apply to the whole city. The urban hygienist principles prescribed the need for wider streets in pursue of fresh air and sunlight. Progressively this led to the definition of wider cross-sections. Nevertheless, in more than one moment the spatial definition of the street as a channel or a corridor was considered a value that must be kept. The more or less conscious maintenance of the spatial definition of the street space as a corridor used different instruments, which may be exemplified using two distinct cases: the first framed by the 1903 *Regulamento da Salubridade das Edificações Urbanas* (Urban Buildings Salubrity Regulation); the second framed by the 1930 *Regulamento Geral da Construção Urbana* (Urban Building General Regulation).

The Regulamento da Salubridade das Edificações Urbanas, with explicitly hygienist goals, proposed the control of the street cross-section proportion with a set of maximum heights for the surrounding buildings that were framed by the width of the street. This regulation defined intervals in which the angle formed by the plan of the street and the plan that passes on the lower edge of the public space and the maximum height of the opposite building varies between 45° and 60°. Nevertheless, because the maximum allowed height for the buildings was 20 meters, on the streets that were wider than 20 meters, that angle would decrease considerably, thus giving origin to wider street cross-sections.

This regulation framed the following three decades, coincident with the first decades of the occupation of the urban expansion area of Lisbon that was defined in the 1903 Plano Geral de Melhoramentos da Capital (General Improvements Plan of the Capital). Although the widths of the proposed and built avenues were wider than 20 meters, the avenues kept a channel like spatial definition due both to the continuity of the margins alignment and to the essential role of trees in the conformation of spatial channels or corridors with proportions than are similar to the pre-existent nearby streets. This fact may be confirmed when comparing the cross-sections of Avenida da Liberdade and Rua de São José. (Figure 11)



**Figure 10:** Street cross-sections of Avenida da Liberdade and Rua de São José.

After the 1930 approval of the Regulamento Geral da Construção Urbana, the building height was conditioned to a 45° line drawn from the intersection of the plan of the floor of the street with the limit of the opposite private space, and a maximum of 21 meters of height, with the exception of the corners that could reach 25 meters of height. Therefore a maximum “ceiling” for the city was defined and the conformation of the corner of the streets as exceptional spaces was underlined. The same regulation defined rules for the façade overhangings, using a similar process to the Parisian regulations that existed from the beginning of the XX century. (Sabaté, 1999)

On the other hand, nevertheless the limitation imposed by salubrity reasons, the chapter regarding the “aesthetical conditions of buildings” recommended the built capacity should be fulfilled to the maximum allowed height of the façades of the contiguous buildings.

This recommendation reflects an association of the spatial definition of the cross-section of the street with the notion of the beauty of the city, namely the ones that are composed from a square matrix. The use of the square as the matrix for the composition of the cross-section of the streets of Lisbon eventually became the most common from that period onward.

## **DIVERSITY, MORPHOLOGY AND MORPHOGENESIS**

The typological framework that was defined on the thesis allowed acknowledging timeless composition principles present on the streets of Lisbon.

The inherited city always constituted a reference for the city that was built, thus the morphological analysis and the typological classification consists in a methodology that inserts in the design process a cultural density on the created elements.

The morphological diversity is an identity value of the streets of Lisbon that stems from an urban sedimentation process where each individual action contributed for the edification of a collective whole. The agreement of this whole is not based on a single project or design but stems from the effect of Time, understood as the set of varied actions, processes and instruments that configured the space, as a true creator process.

## **AN AGREEMENT OF FORM, FUNCTION, PLACE AND TIME.**

When the form of the street reflects the place that welcomes it, that form inherits a pre-existent order of the place it occupies and unique on the specific context.

The genetic relation between the place and the form of the street doesn't limit the needed creativity to articulate it with a programed function on a given moment, it stimulates the agreement between an abstract model and a concrete reality. It is this agreement between the spirit of time and the spirit of place that seems to be at the origin of the diverse and ordered, legible complexity of Lisbon streets.

The natural and artificial pre-existences were understood not as constraints but as generative composition elements that allow the evidence of the memory of the place in the form of the street.

The migration of the existent principles and rules that were inferred for each type of street may be useful for the edification of new streets or the redefinition of the existent in continuity with the inherited city of Lisbon, in continuity with the spirit of the place. Nevertheless, only by assuming in each proposal the contemporary moment, the spirit of time, we may introduce the needed rupture for the creation of significant elements on the cultural context of its time. This is the base of the typological process and critic.

If the "true urbanism work consists in distinguishing the permanent and ephemeral, the superficial and the artificial" (Panerai and Mangin, 1999), then the elaboration of a typological framework of the streets of Lisbon is just a beginning for the eternal edification of the most complex and noteworthy architectural building, the City.

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## LIFE AFTER DEAD. ASSESSMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE OF CÂNDIDO DOS REIS STREET, ALMADA, PORTUGAL

**JORGE GONÇALVES, CATARINA MARTINS**

Instituto Superior Técnico Portugal.

E: [jorgemgoncalves@tecnico.ulisboa.pt](mailto:jorgemgoncalves@tecnico.ulisboa.pt), [catarina.esmartins@gmail.com](mailto:catarina.esmartins@gmail.com)

**LUÍS CARVALHO**

Universidade de Lisboa Portugal

E: [lsc@fa.ulisboa.pt](mailto:lsc@fa.ulisboa.pt)

### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to address the role of requalification of Cândido dos Reis Street, Almada, Portugal, as ignition for social and urban revitalization of a vital part of the city.

This area, degraded, depopulated, aged and functionally decadent was heavily plagued since the 80s of the XX century with deindustrialization, disinvestment in river transport, economic and financial crises and a fierce competition of many other urban fronts better positioned for the explosion of use of individual transport or the demands for better housing conditions.

The centrality of this street, proven with the historical name of Straight Street, the name given to a particular type of street very relevant in the urban fabric in many Portuguese cities, was losing at the expense of these and other problems.

The first decade of this century seemed to bring arguments to the possibility of reversing this decline, particularly with the construction of a panoramic elevator and the opening of a major transportation interface.

The second phase of this change was the intervention itself in the Cândido dos Reis street, either in public space either in private buildings, involving the local authority and local stakeholders.

We intend to propose a description of the process of intervention and add some contributions for the understanding of economic and social results in order to emphasize the key-factors that can promote a renaissance of a street dynamic.

### KEYWORDS

City of Almada, Street requalification, Project assessment, Urban regeneration, Urban life, Lisbon Metropolitan Area



## INTRODUCTION

The street, most of the times, is synonymous of crossing and access. Although its attributes might be endless, those are its main purposes. Unfortunately, its utility disappears with the death of its activities, the diminishment of passers and the decline of the city in which the street belongs. In one moment you might have great animation and bustle, just to be followed by another of great economic, social, urban and architectonic decline.

We are dealing with the street's life cycle. At first, the generated magnetism triggers its effect on the real estate's value, on the selection of the activities installed (and those who are able to pay higher rents on more seductive areas) and, of course, on the people's attraction towards the area, desiring to use and live it.

During the stage that follows the previous description, the activities lose demand and the real estate's interest diminish. With less local and urban income, there is less investment on the building's maintenance, on the public space and local stores. Slowly, the street, even in historical sites, becomes repulsive in social terms or as is discussed by Tiesdell et al. (1996) becomes obsolescent in physical/structural, functional or locational terms. According the same authors his obsolescence can be also connected with the image, legal framework, financial or economic. It's why is important to follow here the concept of 'obsolescence', defined by Lichfield (1988): "the mismatch between the services offered by the fabric of the historic quarters and the contemporary needs" (p.25).

However, this cycle only reveals external symptoms, which address serious problems. The attraction versus repulsion is a consequence of an economic, social and urban global environment, which can be more favourable or unfavourable (Gonçalves, 2015). It is accepted that there are internal and external street factors, which should be analysed in order to better understand the phenomena connected to the street dynamics and therefore achieve a more adequate revitalization intervention (Gonçalves, 2005).

To consider a central area as an important element of the city is fundamental their revitalizing in order to seduce more attention and investments. This is also stated by Doratli (2005): "Whenever a historic area is considered as a part of the economic dynamism, it should be able to compete with the rest of the city. This would not be possible without it being revitalized. Of course it should always be kept in mind that any kind of revitalization efforts should be controlled in the interests of conservation" (p.751).

To some extent, it was what happened with Cândido dos Reis Street, Almada a Portuguese municipality located in the first suburban ring around Lisbon in the south bank of Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Once known as Direita Street<sup>1</sup>, it articulates the high part of Almada (housing area and higher level of services) with the downtown, next to the river and source of much of the activity that generated local employment (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1:**  
The relevance of Rua  
Direita (Now Cândido  
dos Reis Street)

<sup>1</sup> A common typical form in Portugal to designate an old artery that structures the urban fabric, connecting in a "direct" relevant elements of the city and concentrating a great volume and density of functional business units and services.

The city of Almada, in 2011, welcomed about 100 thousand inhabitants, which illustrates the volume of passers who could cross that street. In the immediate surroundings were large areas of activities such as the warehouses of the Ginjal Pier, the Margueira-Lisnave shipyard (which in the 70s had over 7,000 workers) and the transport interface dominated by the presence of the Cacilhas-Lisbon connection by ferries which, until the inauguration of the 25 de Abril bridge in 1966, detained in this area the exclusive crossing between the two river banks of Tagus River.

Therefore, it is easy to realize the importance of the link between the two parts of the city of Almada, which for a long time, was made through by Cândido dos Reis Street.

The loss of centrality of this pathway was accentuated, on one hand with the improvement of the links between the two river banks of the river caused by the railway line on the 25 de Abril bridge (since 1999) with station in Almada and in the main transport interfaces of Lisbon and later with the arrival of the light rail line in 2008 to Cacilhas (Fig. 2), draining a lot of people directly from city centre and others parts to the ferry boat.



**Figure 2:** Outdoor blind massage, Nanping Street, Kunming

Thus, the reasons which lead the Cândido dos Reis street to lose the attraction revealed in past decades were multiple and complex. The strategy to reverse this declining situation, led by the Municipality of Almada, was only able to find external and internal conditions during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

## THE NARRATIVE OF THE CHANGES: IGNITION AND PROJECTS

The rise and fall of a central street is a banal fact. What is no longer common is its rebirth as it involves counteracting the many dynamics that gave rise to the problem. There has to be a combination of internal efforts but also of external circumstances to bring the street back to life, though certainly to a new life and not to a resumption of the same life. Recognizing those factors is always relevant but the correct diagnosis of the so named contextual attributes - the level of obsolescence of physical, functional and locational characteristics and the dynamics of the place - is decisive in the success of revitalization projects (Doratli, 2005).

The changes were deep and varied. But, the changes of form, public space and buildings (considering the change of form as the conversion of use and image of both public spaces and buildings) are an outcome of previous physical changes in the street environment and changes in the metropolitan economic environment and national legal framework.

This is why we agree with Doratli (2005:762): "in the long run, physical revitalization may not be sustainable and it would only be a 'cosmetic' intervention, unless the buildings are occupied and utilized for economic uses, which renders the structures and consequently, the area competitive with the rest of the city. It is the increasing demand, which would ultimately increase the economic value of the properties and the competitiveness of the area. Based on this argument, it is important to be aware that the historic urban quarters should not only be revitalized in physical terms, but also in economical terms. Thus, physical and economic revitalization should complement each other."

## Ignition factors for the rehabilitation

### Tourism

Since the second half of the first decade of this century, the metropolitan area of Lisbon and very particularly the city itself began to feel an increase in tourist demand. This increase occurred in parallel with the establishment of several low cost routes and later with the establishment of Easy Jet (in 2010) and Ryanair (in 2014) bases at Lisbon Airport.

Short-break visits, city-breaks, International conferences or music festivals now have an immense capacity to attract tourism demand to Lisbon and also to obvious places in their proximity, as Cascais, Sintra, Fátima, Évora but also Almada (eg. the Cristo Rei Monument or the seafront). In a decade (2004-2013) the number of tourists in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area increased from 3,090,852 to 4,318,738 (+39.7%) (INE, 2014). The effects of the tourism are very clear in some activities, especially when Portugal and the Lisbon region were submerged by an economic recession since 2008. The activities that most felt these positive consequences were the restaurants and accommodation, and with the possibilities introduced by the internet, there was an increased capacity of business promotion of small size enterprises, as well as travel organizations outside of traditional operators and made directly by individuals and families.

### The local context

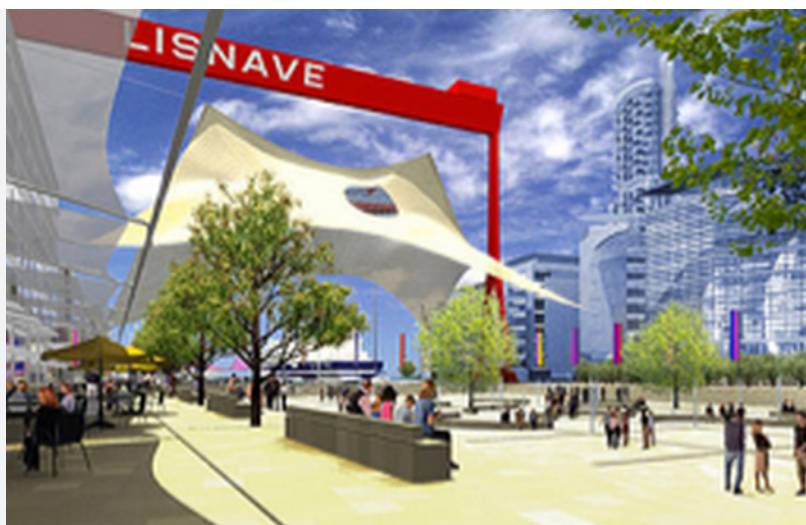
Locally there has been an effort to reverse the decline on Almada riverfront. There are many initiatives taken, especially the following highlights: i. The Boca do Vento Lift (Fig. 3) in 2000, which connects the riverfront at Olho de Boi area to the Almada historic centre; ii. The approval of the Urban Plan of East Almada (UPEA), that defines the occupation of the whole area occupied by the Lisnave shipyard (Fig. 4) and where it is planned to receive thousands of new residents and many other economic activities and equipment; iii. The Ginjal Pier

Detailed Plan which seeks the installation of more housing, tourism structures and creative industries; iv. The reshaping of Alfredo Diniz square, with a new interface transport.



**Figure 3:** Boca do Vento Lift

Thus, it is understandable that what happened recently at Cândido dos Reis Street came not decontextualized from a wide range of events and actions that have occurred at different scales and for different reasons.



**Figure 4:**  
The UPEA  
Source: CMA

### The pillars of change

The intervention in this emblematic area of the city of Almada was developed according two processes that run in complementary and sequential manner. First came the municipal responsibility of conceiving an intervention linked to a qualification of public space involving an area of 5,700 m<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, it occurred a process of qualification of the street buildings.

That sequence reinforce the concept that favorable conditions should be created by the responsible public authorities, like the improvement and adequately maintained of public spaces allied with the encouragement of physical revitalization of the old buildings (Doratli, 2005).

The works of rehabilitation of the street, which included paving and remodelling of infrastructure, began in April 2011 and the inauguration of the “new street” took place on July 13, 2012. The total cost of the operation in public space was almost an half million of euros.

In three years most of the 76 buildings of the street were rehabilitated and the total private investment was over € 1,650,000 which is quite remarkable.

### Public Space

The street’s exceptional location near the Cacilhas Ferry Terminal (connecting directly with Lisbon city centre) and the strong local identity connected to restaurants and Lisbon panoramic view made its rehabilitation a priority within the urban plan, which intends to draw a walking path towards the Cristo Rei monument, starting from the Ferry Terminal.

The intervention strategy was focused on measures that could improve the street in its touristic and commercial assets. Another concern relied on the appropriation of the public space by its residents and owners of establishment, providing new ways of living and using it, and therefore generating new urban and social dynamics. To accomplish this goals, it was decided that street should fullfeel the following transformations:



i) Reduction and restriction of the car presence; ii) Improving the residents' lives by reducing the air and sound pollution; iii) Connect the system of circulation with the tram and the light bus (Flexibus) and promoting bike use; iv) Enrichment of walk circulation connected to the public space and intensification of its activities; v) Reinforce of the commerce front and reinforcement of the touristic services structures, in order to revitalize the local economy; vi) Beautification and structuration of the public reunion spaces (such as the restaurants esplanades); vii) Renovation of the sanitation facilities.

In order to reach the goals and mentioned guidelines, the process begun with the street complete paving, reshaping the car access and route, redrawing the public space and offering it the right street support furniture, making the street space almost exclusive for the pedestrian. The intervention was concluded in 2012.

Concerning the new pavement, both materials and aesthetics were carefully chosen and designed. Using black and white small limestone blocks, the pavement, starting from the top of the street (Bombeiros Voluntários square) shows a series of wave patterns that are spread along the street. Near the end (Alfredo Diniz square), the waves grow bigger, as in setting the scene of the waves crushing on the beach. The scenario is completed by dolphins, caravels and fishing boats patterns, bringing back the memory of what the site once looked like.

In the middle of the street's pavement material and design used were different, creating a bike lane that also works as a path for those with reduced mobility. In general, the intervention intended to be minimalist, in order to offer clarity to the street elements and the architecture surrounding it.

The entire project was developed as a laboratorial experience of a territory management model. Throughout the process, there was a concern about getting the people, who were directly affected, involved. They were consulted before and during the conceptual and construction phases, to collect suggestions and concerns felt, and to inform them about the construction work inconvenient and duration (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5:**  
Initial public session, 2010 (with Lisbon in the back).

The recent years have proved that traditional rationalistic, technocratic and regulatory land use management is today subject to a great amount of pressure as a result of the diminution of the role of the state (Pereira, 2009).

The critical view of the evolution of the planning process encouraged new approaches that seek to reinstate the genuine involvement of the public in the construction of everyday spaces (Gonçalves, 2015)



After the work was complete, a monitoring report was made, and repeated annually ever since. The city council was and still is interested in consulting the street population, with open public sessions (together with a social assistant working with the city council) and the creation of discussion forums (Martins, 2016).

Thus, the whole intervention resulted from the conciliation between collective and private interests in order to effectively achieve greater community involvement in the planning process, it is important to be able to design a participation process that is adjusted to the reality of the community in question (Gonçalves, 2015).

Because the intervention was under the first URA's program<sup>2</sup>, it managed to respect and improve the street's image and history, with both buildings rehabilitation and the street's pavement design choices of material and patterns. As a whole, the project was managed to promote the historical and cultural local specificities. It made the street much safer, comfortable and attractive, and also improved the street's accessibilities to all its different establishments (commercial, residential and restaurants).

These aspects are crucial for the spontaneous meetings with different street users (Jacobs, 2000) The street reshaped the public space (Figure 6), offering it simultaneously three distinctive meeting and gathering spaces. People in general noticed a considerable increase in the number of children using the street freely, and the amount of families were now using the street's facilities, showing good indicators of the street's image and safety improvement.

This factor triggered the opening of different and new establishments on the street contributing to the growth of its diversity. This leads to more people going to and passing by the street, increasing the diversity and number of local users and tourists.



**Figure 6:** Cândido Reis Street in 2016

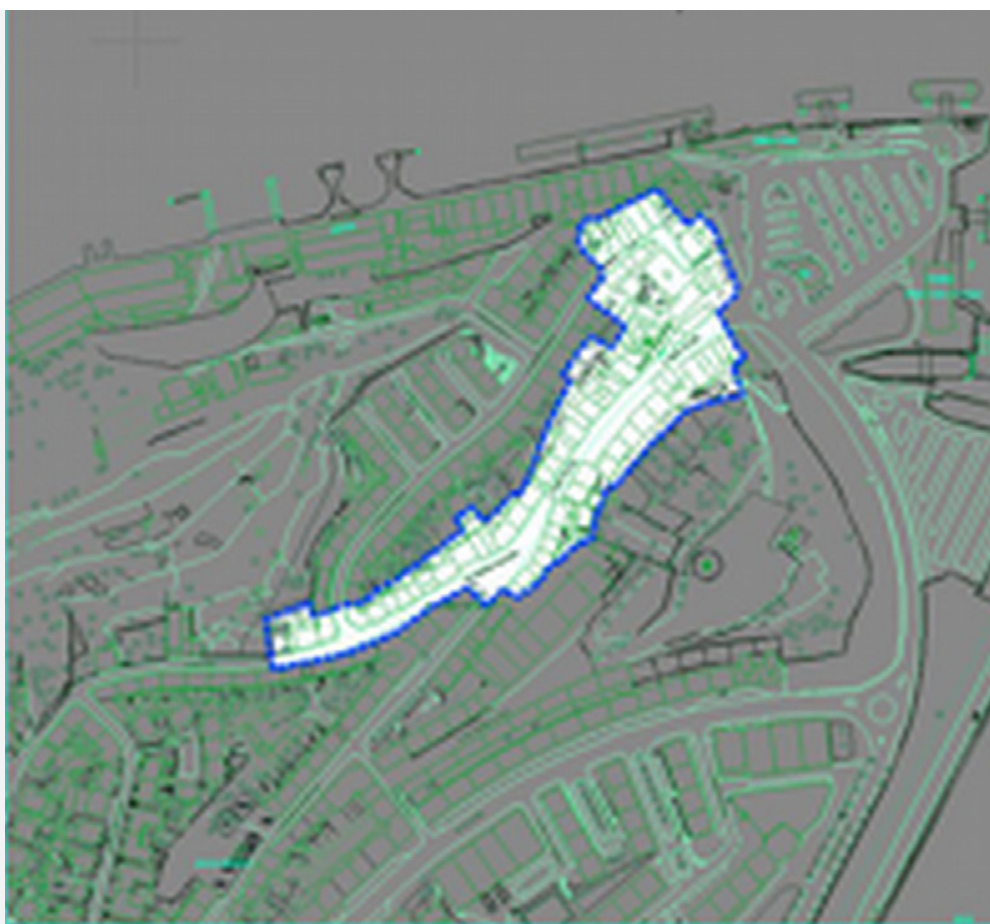
The new emerged establishments had a commercial character connected to the street's identity and the local people expectations. The establishment types are different and mixed enough to generate attractiveness and movement on the street during different times of the day (Jacobs, 2000). Also noticeable was the growth of a community sense between all establishments, which together with the city council began to plan many and different street events. Because the intervention focused on improving the image and quality of the public space, the contact between the street users and the establishment owners strengthened, and they both witnessed the streets renovation process and image reshaping.

<sup>2</sup> URA, Urban Regeneration Area. Urban areas provided with a specific status to enforce and promote urban rehabilitation (Law n. ° 32/2012, 14-08).

## Building rehabilitation

The second part of this process was the rehabilitation of the street buildings facades. This goal was developed taking advantage of the legal possibilities that the legal status of Urban Regeneration Area (URA) allow. An URA is a territory that has to be outlined if, in case of “failure, deterioration or obsolescence of buildings, infrastructure, the equipment of collective use and urban and green spaces for collective use, particularly regarding their conditions of use, robustness, safety, aesthetics or health, justifies an integrated intervention through an urban renewal operation approved as self-instrument or in detailed plan of urban renewal” (Law No. 32/2012, August 14).

The existence of the URA-Cacilhas gives the territory a significant range of effects, such as the existence of tax benefits associated with municipal taxes on wealth and patrimony, and the possibility for the local establishment for owners to access to tax and financial incentives and benefits in order to invest in urban rehabilitation (Fig. 7).



**Figure 7:** URA-Cacilhas. Source: CMA

The processes of rehabilitation were divided into different categories (doors, window frames, rooftop, uses, esplanades constructive aspects) so that the result would guaranty the right preservation and enrichment of the local identity.

The effectiveness of these guidelines can easily be identified with the rehabilitation cases of the Church of Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso and the reconversion of the old Fire post into the new town’s touristic centre (Fig. 8).



**Figure 8:** New  
touristic centre.

The main objectives associated with this part of the intervention were: i. Ensure the rehabilitation of the buildings that are degraded or functionally inadequate; ii. Improve the liveability and functionality of the urban housing stock and unbuilt spaces; iii. Ensure protection and promote the development of cultural heritage; iv. Affirm the heritage, material and symbolic values as identity factors, differentiation and urban competitiveness; v. Promoting environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability of the urban spaces; vi. Promote urban renewal, guided by strategic objectives of urban development, where the actions of material nature are designed in an integrated manner and actively combined in its execution with interventions of social and economic nature; vii. Ensure functional integration and economic, social and cultural diversity in the existing urban fabric; viii. Promote the fixation of young people; ix. Develop new access solutions to adequate housing; x. Promote the creation and improvement of the accessibility for people with disabilities; xi. Encourage the adoption of energy efficiency criteria in public and private buildings; xii. Ensure the principle of sustainability, ensuring that interventions are based on a financially sustainable and balanced model through innovative and sustainable solutions from a social cultural and environmental point of view (C. M. Almada, n/d).

## **COMBINED EVALUATION OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE INTERNAL OUTER-CONTEXT AND INNER-CONTEXT AND INTERVENTION PROJECT**

Physical interventions need often, in one hand, legal and financial incentives, among others, in order to happen. On the other hand, their consequences need to be measured by the capacity on the attraction of residents, investments, initiatives and new users. This is not, therefore, to assess the formal quality of interventions or even the process, but its ability to generate urban animation, social and functional mix (Martins, 2016).

Thus, with the evidence qualification of public space and the built, what has happened to rehabilitated spaces? Do they remain vacant? Were there new activities or did they simply remain traditional? Were the effects of the external environment felt? What about the internal context?

## Residential real estate

The transformations in Cândido dos Reis street are relatively new, so the record of changes in the residential real estate market is not yet provable, although still seem evident a movement with two divergent forces. On one hand, the substantial change, and qualification, of public space and the proper promotion of the role of this area in the context of the city of Almada, comes to value the street's and its surroundings' property attributes. On the other hand, that substantial change entails a use intensity connected to the commercial activity, associated with restaurants and leisure, which may introduce disturbing factors in the balance between these uses and residential use. Therefore, it is expected that the residential real estate promotion is lead to a specific type of "new residents", who understand this conflict of uses as a valued element of a sense of urbanity.

## Commerce real estate and services

As a fixed background, we have the temporal proximity of the occurred alterations and the dissenting movements, which, predictably, should occur in the residential real estate market. With this scenario, we have the real estate component linked to trade and services as a fast and intense changing aspect regarding the street's "new life". Cafés and restaurants diversified and multiplied, clearly dominating the street. There is the persistent presence of the coffee shop or the restaurant that immediately associates with the Cacilhas memory, and there is also the introduction of new products, flavours and images, some under the franchising format. Still, commercial establishments connected to other branches remain and are valued, even with if the commercial machine occupies almost the entire ground floor of the street. This offers a continuity relationship between built structure and public space.

Thus, It's possible in the Cândido dos Reis Street apply Tiesdell et al. (1996:135) typology for the renewal in terms of economic activity:

- i. Functional restructuring: changes in occupation with new uses or activities replacing the former ones.
- ii. Functional diversification: keeping the existing uses to some extent and introducing some new ones.
- iii. Functional regeneration: existing uses remain but operate more efficiently or profitably.

## Public space usage

The recent rehabilitation of the built structure is occasionally noticeable, but still does not have a systematic nature. It is certainly the qualifying aspect of public space that takes, for now, the main role in the intervention made at Cândido dos Reis street. The convergence of various actions (some directly related to the project, others "outside" the project and also others parallel) determined a substantial change in the use of public space: the removal of motor traffic and parking of vehicles, giving the street back to the pedestrian; the promotion of an urban design that ensures universal access but also security in all public spaces; the enhancement of public transport (highlighting the Flexibus2); the street occupation by a wide range of activities that are complementary (terraces, public parkway, children's games). Surely this dynamic, which results from the proliferation of uses and activities, is not continuous in time (varying during the hours of the day and the day of the



week), may even have some seasonality, and it is not free of conflicts between divergent interests. After all, the shifting of energy and conflicts of a city.

### **Sustainability and dependencies**

The completion of the project brought a huge range of consequences for the public space and the buildings, but the main change, the one extracted from empirical evaluation, is that urban life returned to this segment of the city of Almada.

According to the environmental perspective, urban regeneration allows energy efficiency gains in buildings and establishments, with financial benefits for families and economic activities. Also with the street pedestrianizing, there was an appreciation of public transport, made by electric minibuses, and a significant qualification of the noise and air quality.

From the entrepreneurship and the attracting investment and jobs point of view, the street's image improvement the street (the design, physical rehabilitation facades, but also the interior of the buildings and the qualification of public space making it more convenient and accessible), allowed the hostage of both traditional local activities (restaurants and local shops) and many others with a more qualified and differentiated offer (such as tourist accommodation and more specialized restoration). The decrease in vacant establishments also gives a positive signal of the existing attraction dynamics.

On a more social point of view, the attraction of a multitude of people brings a diversity that enriches urban life and the interaction between different people (local, tourists, workers, etc.).

In other words, the street went from proscribed place to a seductive one. Apart from this daily influx, is important to emphasize the new possibilities of social mix introduced by the properties qualification, capturing new residents, younger and skilled, while maintaining the traditional population. The public space, with fewer obstacles and more comfortable, also becomes more inclusive, stimulating the use of an active mobility.

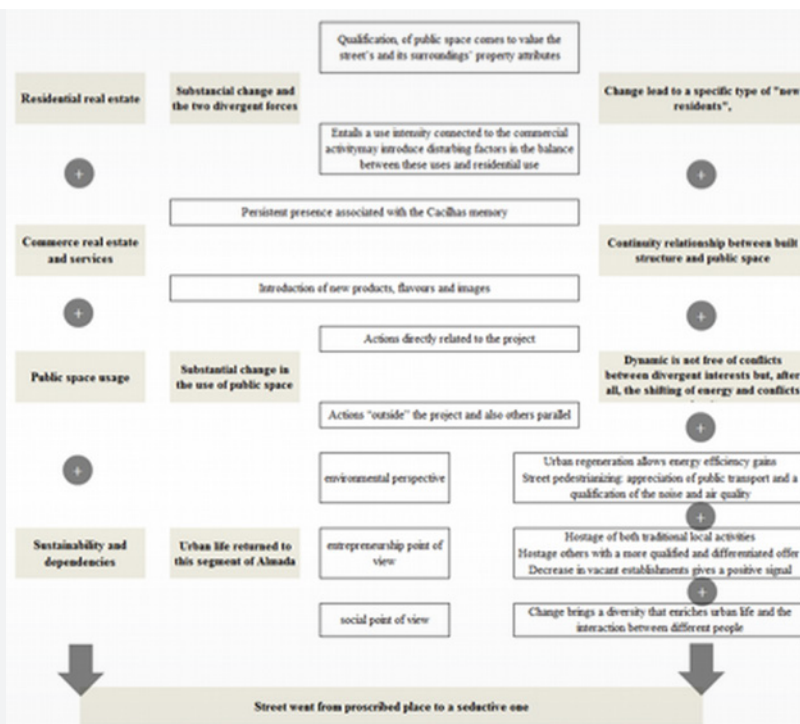
Facing this successful scenario, becomes relevant to anticipate dependencies and risks that this case also endures, in order to trigger mitigation devices. One risk is the importance that the current touristic dynamics has on the city of Lisbon. Its future decline could have serious consequences for this urban development model, and could possibly be remedied by the inclusion of larger national demand segments. A second dependence or risk is related to a traditional problem: these areas can become victims of their own success and feed a rampant gentrification which ultimately socially homogenize the area by removing the identity that initially supported the change.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The figure 9 show the systematization of the methodology of evaluation and the results presented in the previous section.

Of all this narrative should withdraw some useful lessons for the approach to the revitalization process of a street that is an urban reference.





**Figure 9:** Interaction between the internal outer-context and inner-context

In our view, the first lesson is that a piece of city in decline is the result of multiple factors but which often dominate the external. Only the understanding of this dependence allows adequately address the challenge of reversing its decline.

The success of a regeneration operation of this type is measured by the real estate demand - for housing and for business - the area can attract. But it is also important to verify the change profiles either of residents or existing activities because it proves the adaptation to a new context.

The instruments that appear to be most useful relate to tax incentives for work in private properties provided by law and the involvement of local government in conducting an intensive and participatory process of qualification of public space and its subsequent management (mobility, use of space public entertainment and events, etc.).

The final conclusion is related to the decisive importance of the external environment to the street which is targeted for intervention since the economic dynamic, urban, regional or metropolitan is almost always the major spark of change.

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# CHANGES IN URBAN MORPHOLOGY PATTERNS: CULTURAL DYNAMICS AND CONNECTIVITY

**ALENKA FIKFAK, SAJA KOSANOVIĆ**

University of Ljubljana Slovenia, University of Priština Kosovska Mitrovica.

E: alenka.fikfak@fa.uni-lj.si, saja.kosanovic@pr.ac.rs

## ABSTRACT

Cities are subjected to fast changes in urban morphology, due to economic and cultural globalization, demographic changes and migratory flows, urban planning strategies, social networks, and other factors. These spatial dynamics are happening under diverse visible and invisible relations between cultural changes, spatial boundaries and the needs of connectivity between morphology patterns vs. semantic, built vs. voids, formal vs. informal, self-organization vs. planned regularities, and urban places vs. street connectivity, mainly following organic dialogues characterized by the complexity of “fractal-like patterns not very different from those displayed by natural systems” (Buhl et al., 2006). Research on connectivity of urban forms indicates that the most functional towns are those with a multiple number of interconnections at all scales, according to the fractal-like tree diagram (Zappulla et al., 2014).

The work articulates elements of identification, inventory and evaluation of interconnections in urban morphology patterns. In the first phase, the research refers to different urban morphologies in cities: Beirut, Brussels, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Moscow, Mostar, Kosovska Mitrovica, and others. By following the research methods of cities’ urban evolution, the study aims to investigate the concept of connectivity in contested spaces, and prevailing composition in urban fragmentation. On the other hand, the research compares conventional research methods and tools with the subject matter of Italo Calvino’s book *Invisible Cities*. The study was done at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, as part of the Inter-university Workshop ‘Urban Connectivity in Contested Spaces and Border conditions’, on the case study of the location in Beirut, with the students of architecture and urbanism together involved in experiential work.

## KEYWORDS

Streets, urban places, contested spaces, Italo Calvino

## INTRODUCTION – UNCONTROLLED CHAOS OR A DIFFERENT ORDER?

*“Only the most naive scientist believes that the perfect model is the one that perfectly represents reality. Such a model would have the same drawbacks as a map as large and detailed as the city it represents, a map depicting every park, every street, every building, every tree, every pothole, every inhabitant, and every map. Were such a map possible, its specificity would defeat its purpose: to generalize and abstract.” (Gleick, 1991)*

Concentration is no longer a measure of urbanity, but rather urban integration is achieved using new communication technologies allowing for the dislocation of the once physically connected activities in space. Due to our persistence in the models of the previous town-planning theory and practice, the processes leading to the creation of ‘chaos’ in urban structure seem to be a consequence of our current professional helplessness, rather than a fundamental change in the system. The word chaos in everyday use means complete disorder, utter confusion, a total lack of organization, etc.; thus, we can rightfully ask ourselves: “What has chaos got to do with intelligent systems?” (Kokol et al., 2000: 151). In line with Lorenz’s (Gleick, 1991) realisations about the sensitivity to minimum change in initial conditions, as evident in the famous butterfly effect: “Does the flap of a butterfly’s wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?”, we conclude that chaotic systems are dynamic, meaning that they change their condition as a function of time. Cities exist in a vortex of continually changing dynamic energy flows that we call nature (Salat, Bourdic, 2014). In truth, this is phenomenology where matrices must be sought for during the crises of previous models that still have an impact and that were, with their single-layered simplicity, unable to interpret modern structures, particularly when dealing with ‘intermediate’, non-articulated and non-used urban spaces. At the global level of urban morphology, in general, the principle of continuity will prevail, while at a more detailed micro scale in ‘contested spaces’, when looking at a fragment (an element of the moment), the dynamics of chaos will prevail: dense vs rare, closed vs transitional, built vs open, central vs peripheral, by considering the location and cultural specificities of morphological units as a mosaic of various activities and intensities at various levels of spatial organisation. The arising of space configurations and time rhythms in dissipative structures is a phenomenon known as ‘order by fluctuations’ (Prigogine, Stengers, 1979).

Changes in modern society include the transformation of events in the entire space, on a ‘dispersed territory’ that is no longer nationally defined. The relationship of ‘dispersion’ between the new social and housing ways of behaviour is manifested in the meeting between ‘horizontal flows’ passing through space and inserting various content in it, and some ‘vertical flows’ linked to the historical, i.e. the physicality of each individual place. New urban structures are a product of these spontaneous processes which are part of evolution. Evolution involves a combination of continuity and change that occurs in response to the environment (Salat, Bourdic, 2014). It allows us to understand why organisms differ and yet are connected over time and space (Dawkins, 1986).

## METHODOLOGY – COMPARING STRUCTURAL FEATURES

Considering a city as a place of interactions between humans and the built environment, maps of social activity reveal how urban–social systems have self-adaptive properties like complex dissipative systems (Pulselli, 2011). When talking about existing urban structures, we encounter the problem of recognition and the ‘objective’ interpretation thereof. Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* (1974) poetically show the problems of

understanding, diversity, and contradictions taking place in a 'city'. There is no single interpretation, as there is a mix of history, culture, social environment, life of the user and the visitor, climate and environmental conditions, and, finally, the urban and architectural culture in relation to the existing built structure. This blending of 'invisible forces' in the morphology of the urban pattern is well described by Calvino for the case of a city of Clarice: "More decadences, more burgeonings have followed one another in Clarice. Populations and customs have changed several times; the name, the site, and the objects hardest to break remain. Each new Clarice, compact as a living body with its smells and its breath, shows off, like a gem, what remains of the ancient Clarices, fragmentary and dead... Only this is known for sure: a given number of objects is shifted within a given space, at times submerged by a quantity of new objects, at times worn out and not replaced... Perhaps Clarice has always been only a confusion of chipped gimcracks, ill-assorted, obsolete." (Calvino, 1974: 107-108)

This survey is focused on two levels, which are referred to the elements of understanding about urban morphology patterns, with the interconnection of evolution in open spaces or voids, as visual analysis through the experiential work on site. The initial question (first level) of this study underpins how we interpret (from phases of identification to inventory) and systemically process (to the phase of evaluation) these momentary urban conditions in contested spaces into a 'readable' morphological urban structure. In order to explore the 'readability' of urban interconnections, we have studied 10 urban structures in different 'multi-cultural cities'<sup>1</sup> (5 of them are presented in Figure 1). The study of every single urban morphological pattern was made according to 10 different topics, which are listed and explained in detail in the next chapter. The focus was on the comparison between urban places vs street connectivity.

Like all living organisms, cities are evolutionary open systems (Salat et al., 2014: 79). If we compare the everyday life and culture of inhabitants in an urban structure of contested spaces to a neurological system, we can observe at micro level the variability of simultaneous dynamics of flows which are very unstable. On the other hand, in traffic mobility we can note the similarity with the 'coronary artery branching' that "has fractal nature and acts in accordance with most important properties of fractals: self-similarity and non-integer dimension" (Klemenc, 2015). With what human system can we then compare urban morphological patterns in contested spaces? For a built structure, as such we thus say that the basic element of space is a cell, i.e. the basic building and functional unit of all living organisms. In contested spaces, we can observe the situation of a genetic code made of people, location, and nature. When to come to the overloaded system in a single location, with too much tension between different layers – this seems like a conflicting situation.

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<sup>1</sup> With people of different ethnic groups which are in an everyday transition of migrations.





**Figure 1:** Exploring the 'readability' of urban interconnections (presentation of 5 of the 10 examples used for the research).

The methodology used for this study consists of literature review, mapping and exploring the spatial phenomena through different case studies (first level, 10 urban structures in different cities). The selection of case studies was made regarding the most important criterion: ethical and cultural blending of population in the selected area. The following research methods were implemented:

- Data collection of case studies in the initial research phase. Cases were selected from different digital maps with compilation of historical maps (inventory of urban history and morphological evolution) and digital imagery of historical urban views.
- Analysis of the satellite imagery system. It encompasses complex digital simulations such as: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Getmapping and the GIS User Community, which is combined with geo-data from sources as Google Earth, Google Maps, and Bing.
- Analysis at the level of regional development of urban sprawl and land use (Corine 2000 and Natura 2000 data).

With all contradictions taking place on the micro scale regarding sensorial features (such as textures, colours, shading, noise and aromas); scarcity driven precarious infrastructure (such as sanitation systems and drainage); water, soil and air pollutants; brownfields; and natural or manned hazards, we can experience a complex layering in the 'place of indeterminacy' (Zappula et al., 2014). But how to use and follow research methods described above (general level) and analyse specific sensitiveness and fillings in micro spaces? This section of our research is not oriented towards a study of fractal analysis (which has been already done by several authors, e.g. Torrens 2000; Salat et al., 2014) but to find if a morphological pattern observed in the micro level (from the point of user, tourist, or researcher) reveals the cultural tension between different urban situations, and if the 'contested places' are 'places of transformation' or 'situations in transition' regarding the elements of morphological hierarchy, genesis, symmetries, scaling, axis in patterns of unit-organization. Those can be defined as geometric pattern tissues or fabric multicell-aggregate with spacing, shape, orientation, density – as a topologically deformable network. In those urban forms with no-hierarchy of scale, we observed elements as: paths, edges, landmarks, nodes, districts, parks, rivers, streets, blocks, housing, programmes, cultural diversity, etc.

## EXPERIENTIAL WORK AND ANALYSIS

An in-depth assessment of urban morphology with specifics of cultural background requires diversified information sources and effective tools at different scales. A combination of methods (chapter: Methodology – Comparing structural feature) utilised, with data from climate, topological, geographical, cultural and urban sources, were observed as pictorial phenomena (including history of urban morphology and image, presented in Figures 2 and 3 as a case study of North Kosovska Mitrovica) and explained through the system of dualities (second level):

### Urban morphology vs semantic

Urban tissues express the form of images, words, sounds, or gestures through various structural urban geometries of every-day fluxuality of flows. The morphogenesis of patterns has, in their stability of formal, visible, and passive urban form (architectural units with dimensional relations and information about geometry and form) invisible, active, and informal cultural significances (elementary relations and interactions) and semantic capacities (expressions in the way of living) to excite or objectify responses. Morphology of an urban environment can be, in its structure, similar (size, mixing, full-empty relationship, etc.), but its 'invisible' cultural characteristics and specificities determine the 'genius loci' and specific identity. "The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps,..." (Calvino, 1974: 149). Example: Figure 2e, 2f, 3a, 3d.

### Building volumes vs voids

Analyses of space between built tissue (mass) and open spaces (voids). The void is not just another lot to fill. Sometimes it is the sacred space between two different human groups, a border without the physic line, an imaginary obstacle that will never be surpassed even if there is no barrier, a wall, a limit. Just a void, even if at a distance touchably close to two buildings, is an unlimited space between two souls. "But in vain I set out to visit the city: forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to



**Figure 2:** North Kosovska Mitrovica in the past (archive of Miodrag Radomirović).

be more easily remembered, Zora has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her.” (Calvino, 1974: 16). Example: 2f.

Layers of public spaces vs invisible relations: In the sense of transformation of cities, the broad term urban stage can be used for public spaces,... with mostly public access or approach, that is, any kind of social setting (scene) at any given area in the city, which contains, under different contexts, the minimum temporary or permanent features of placeness (Hočevan, 2000: 138). Markets, streets, parks, beaches, courtyards, playgrounds, watersides and other areas are in permanent transformation and movement, which is not the result of morphology of space, but of articulation in sensations and experiences inserted into space-time by the users. “The streets of the Laudomia of the dead are just wide enough to allow the gravedigger’s cart to pass, and many windowless buildings look out on them; but the pattern of the streets and the arrangement of the dwellings repeat those of the living Laudomia,...” (Calvino, 1974: 140). Example: Figure 2e, 3a.





**Figure 3:** North Kosovska Mitrovica, may 2016 (archive S. K. – Saja Kosanović, B. F. – Branislav Folić).

### Water infrastructure vs traffic

Water in built-up areas allows the user of the open public space to remain in contact with nature, and a unique formation of a people-friendly urban environment (Brilly et al., 2003). On the other hand, when talking about transport it is important to realise that the very decrease in fatalities in urban areas is attributed mostly to the interventions in traffic management, public awareness, safer vehicle designs, and interventions in road infrastructure. "In Esmeralda, city of water, a network of canals and a network of streets span and intersect each other... Combining segments of the various routes, elevated or on ground level, each inhabitant can enjoy every day the pleasure of a new itinerary to reach the same places." (Calvino, 1974: 88). Example: Figure 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3c, 3d.

### Green framework vs built structure

Different typologies of green elements help to alleviate the problems of stormwater amelioration and pollution, urban heat island mitigation and energy conservation, as a resource of urban biodiversity (Connop, Nash, 2014), and contribute to the provision

of ecosystem services. The main criteria for the composition between green and grey are: orientation, wind flows and openness to the landscape. "Its green border repeats the dark outline of the buried lake; an invisible landscape conditions the visible one; everything that moves in the sunlight is driven by the lapping wave enclosed beneath the rock's calcareous sky." (Calvino, 1974: 20). Example: Figure 2b, 3b.

### **Urban patterns as regular vs irregular form**

Simple patterns, structures are those forms that are defined with the minimum number of data (point, line, area, and spatial model; network – regular, irregular, triangular, polygonal, etc.). These are simple, 'infallible' models, easily legible and manageable. However, there are not many clear forms in urban space. Regular patterns change due to progress of time and insertion of new elements; the simple order transforms into a form perceived as visual chaotic image. "No one remembers what need or command or desire drove Zenobia's founders to give their city this form, and so there is no telling whether it was satisfied by the city as we see it today, which has perhaps grown through successive superimpositions from the first, now undecipherable plan." (Calvino, 1974: 20). Example: Figure 2c, 3d.

### **Dynamic flows vs boundaries**

Population growth, migration, new infrastructure systems, technologies, rapid progress and innovations together create continuous flows in the global space on a daily basis. The continuous operation of dynamic flows in the process of constant evolution guides us to perceive the city and space in 'time', which is only the current component. Simultaneously with the recording of these thoughts, the space already changed, while the 'border' and 'border conditions' became rooted even more. "Though it is painstakingly regimented, the city's life flows calmly like the motion of the celestial bodies and it acquires the inevitability of phenomena not subject to human caprice." (Calvino, 1974: 150). Example: Figure 2c, 3c, 3d.

### **Self-organisation vs planned regularities**

In a study of non-planned settlements, Scahur (1991) affirms that self-generating forms evolve from physical forces in autonomous processes and as a result of a new equilibrium. Self-organised systems are very diverse, always in constant variability at a systemic level as well as in 'instability' of processes in transformation of urban patterns, which are continuously in motion; the process of socio-spatial transformations that evolve with self-organisation – the new equilibrium. "One of the half-cities is permanent, the other is temporary, and when the period of its sojourn is over, they uproot it, dismantle it, and take it off, transplanting it to the vacant lots of another half-city." (Calvino, 1974: 150). Example: Figure 2c, 3d.

### **Planning symmetries vs historical scaling symmetries**

The urban morphology composition is not important by itself but it has, for each single human, today a 'recycle, reuse, repair and rethink (4R)' connotation with orientation on the use at the level of the human scale. Historically, the urban forms were activated as horizontal urban structures (repetition of small geometric characteristics of plots in the urban morphogenesis), whilst the symbols were dominant orienteers in space expressed verticality – in a strong scale hierarchy ensuring system efficiency, as a hierarchy of



scale. "All of Eudoxia's confusion, the mules' braying, the lampblack stains...; but the carpet proves that there is a point from which the city shows its true proportions, the geometrical scheme implicit in its every, tiniest detail." (Calvino, 1974: 96). Example: Figure 2c, 2e, 2f, 3d, 3e.

### Urban places vs street connectivity

Significance and physicality of dispersion result from the manner of modern mobility, particularly in developing road connections. Today, the road functions as a link between one's doorstep and a place. A car is sometimes an office, a home, a meeting point, while the road, as part of the landscape, becomes the place where we live today. Thus the road, passable or not, is becoming an element of connection between various open spaces - locations of social interaction. "Phyllis is a space in which routes are drawn between points suspended in the void: the shortest way to reach that certain merchant's tent, avoiding that certain creditor's window" (Calvino, 1974: 91). Example: Figure 2c, 2e, 3a, 3e, 3f.

## RESULTS

The complexity of contemporary urban morphologies and their pattern structures and meaning in contested spaces can be understood via processes of transition, which are under reaction of instable dynamic flows of historical / contemporary cultural and ethical changes. In urban tissue, street connectivity is the basic structure, a symbolic void, a backbone to which different patterns of urban morphology are connected. Transitional urban fabric of contested spaces can be defined as complex, motional and organic, where the theory of chaos can help conventional planning to rethink social and spatial configurations. In the experiential work through studying the dualities, we present the following results:

**Urban morphology vs semantic:** Fine morphological pattern allows for freer development of mixed cultural content and less control than with the conventional urban block organisation or strict line construction. **Building volumes vs voids** Voids are often filled with informal construction which is in transition - structures without the content or structures with a distinctly ethical programme (retail, small businesses, etc.). **Layers of public spaces vs invisible relations:** invisible relationships are more present and concentrated in a fine morphological pattern, with an abundance of programmes, structures and content. Public space is often road space intended for traffic and the user – a different type of using non-planned 'shared spaces'. **Water infrastructure vs traffic:** Water environment is a protected asset. If it is located inside contested spaces or 'border conditions', it is an area of lesser interest and, as a result, these are disorganised, degraded areas, land-fill sites, etc. Transport is the basic element of spatial organisation everywhere, but often these areas lack public transport. **Green framework vs built structure:** Green areas are present as park areas, and less like organised green areas complementing the morphological patterns. If a green area is part of contested spaces or 'border conditions', it presents a void area, a retreat from the rest of urban fabric, rather than a park. **Urban patterns as regular vs irregular form:** in contested spaces irregular forms prevail, as they are a consequence of the continuous stacking of fine non-formal construction (patterns that can be defined as natural morphogenesis with repetition of self-similarities). **Dynamic flows vs boundaries:** contested spaces are, contrary to 'border conditions' (areas of voids), areas of continuous dynamics of changing. **Self-organisation vs planned regularities:** in general, most of the patterns were developed based on regulatory forms, planned and unplanned ones, with a continuous updating of

the forms of self-organisation. **Planning symmetries vs historical scaling symmetries:** in both cases, we talk about spatial symmetries as these, according to the theory of chaos and fractal forms continuing the principles of 'living organic structures', occur in a recurring, but different form. **Urban places vs street connectivity:** in contested spaces, there are no more modern open spaces, and we see that the street is often more significant for experiential space, which is also a consequence of the densification of the morphological pattern.

## CONCLUSION

By studying the urban patterns in contested spaces, we discover that the idea of the re-activation of voids through the street connectivity and non-defined open spaces can be a new opportunity to develop and protect historical, cultural, and ethical composition as a new type of morphogenesis in which more 'nature-like' randomness morphology is included, where the main criterion is protection of natural impacts such as weather, resources, availability, population, natural barriers with interactions between their many parts.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper was made possible through the research done by the group of students working in the Inter-university workshop 'Urban Connectivity in Contested Spaces and Border conditions', on the case study of the location in Beirut: Marko Lazič, Aleš Švigelj, Valentina Gjura, Neja Pavlin, Urša Zupančič, Karmen Slapar, Špela Doles, Majda Selak, Ajda Racman, Kaja Krebel, and Ana M. Korošec.

This paper is published in the framework of the project: KLABS – Creating the Network of Knowledge Labs for Sustainable and Resilient Environments, 561675-EPP-1-2015-1-XK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP.

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# TRACK 9

## **T9** SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF STREETS: COLLECTIVE MEMORY-IES, MIGRANT COMMUNITIES, PERFORMANCES, AND EVENTS

Track chair | **Professor ANTONI BETTLOCH REMESAR**  
University of Barcelona, Polis Research Centre, Art-City-Society  
Co-chair | **Dr. JEAN-PIERRE EL ASMAR**  
FAAD, NDU

### **DESCRIPTION**

the advents of the growing migrant and refugee communities, and the social dimension of corresponding street life are the focus of this track. The generation of niches and sub-communities to cope with a new context are manifested in different forms within different cultural and economic urban contexts. These manifestations reflect different social and spatial configurations. Contributions are invited targeting the integration of these communities that challenge the role of streets in social assimilation, public events, citizenship and other related problems. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research addressing issues related to collective memory and its role in the integration of new comers is invited to this track.

### **KEYWORDS**

Collective memory, event, urban performance, spectacle, social assimilation, citizenship.





# HOUSING AND THE INTERNAL STREET NETWORK AS A PLACE OF APPROPRIATION AND SOCIALIZATION - THE CASE OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN CYPRUS

**ANDREAS SAVVIDES**

University of Cyprus Nicosia Cyprus. E: als@ucy.ac.cy

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to address architectural and urban planning challenges in the context of internal street networks in social housing milieus that act as backbone of community appropriation and socialization efforts. One example is the case of Cyprus which has acted as both a stepping stone to Europe as well as being a final destination to waves of immigrants seeking better living conditions for themselves and their families. Many a time though and before being allowed to either move on or settle down on the island, immigration frameworks direct a significant number of these people to be housed in transitional quarters, which may be a very stressful state of affairs. In these cases the public milieu, in the form of the internal street network around which many of these transitional living quarters are organized, becomes the center point of social public life fostering a sense of community around which the residents rally. Consequently, in terms of physical planning it is important to propose a methodology that examines the issue through three prongs of investigation. The first prong concerns the city and regional scale of any such mobility network; the second examines the typology and organization of street patterns that will accommodate the target population; and the third one looks into the design of this internal network of streets as communal / public spaces and venues of increased socialization and normalization of social networks, acceptance and diversity. The paper will illustrate case studies that attempt to demonstrate this practice with the physical layout of transitional living quarters so as to promote feelings of shared and communal ownership, maintenance and appropriation and rigorous use of public space amongst the residents themselves and with the local population.

## KEYWORDS

Refugee housing, migrant communities, social justice

## INTRODUCTION

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which focuses on forced migration and displacement, “the drivers that force people to migrate are complex and overlapping (Long, 2011; Crisp, 2006). Rapid and slow-onset hazards, conflict and generalized violence can all drive migration from rural to urban areas, between and within urban areas. A combination of factors including economic pressure, may also force people to migrate.

The general objectives of the workshop on which this paper is based, are to examine the stated factors above by integrating a city and regional planning network and a public policy framework that looks at the issues through a spatial filter and analyzes project parameters in the third dimension. The project looks at the way in which the public authorities managing the influx of migrating population in cities address – in socioeconomic and spatial terms – the basic issues of providing housing, increased security, increased economic opportunity, greater access to services, anonymity, proximity to power brokers and sometimes greater access to assistance.

The displaced may have fled one urban area for another, within or outside their country. Disasters may also cause widespread destruction of buildings, creating displaced populations within a city. The complex character of urban displacement drivers means that people arrive with very different assets, vulnerabilities, expectations and aspirations and these are some of the aspects investigated by the research team.

Urban displacement presents both risks and opportunities. Vulnerability is frequently a consequence of unplanned urban development itself, resulting in poor provision of infrastructure and services. Longstanding residents also suffer the consequences of poor urban governance and they are confronted in slums with the same threats to their health, prospects for education and physical safety, and competition over land and resources. The influx of displaced populations may compound the problems and risks that residents already experience.

In some instances, municipal authorities feel overwhelmed by urban migration and consider the displaced an additional burden on overstretched resources and infrastructure. They may also be prejudiced against displaced populations due to ethnicity, political affiliation or perceived security threats. However, the settlement of displaced populations in urban areas can also bring economic benefits. For example, in many cities across the world, displaced populations are making a significant (though unquantifiable) contribution to the urban economy and the comparison of observations amongst the cooperating nations of Cyprus and Romania will benefit through the juxtapositions of their findings which are reexamined using spatial filters and techniques.

## THE POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

According to the Commission Staff Working Document, SWD (2003) 138 final, “Climate change, environmental degradation, and migration” accompanying the document “An EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change,” environmental factors have always acted as a driver of human mobility (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003; ECR, 2001). The question how environmental change is likely to affect population movements in the future has grown significantly over the last decade.

The specific focus of this project was on housing and human mobility due to economic and political crisis, including slow degradation of physical and social networks over time.

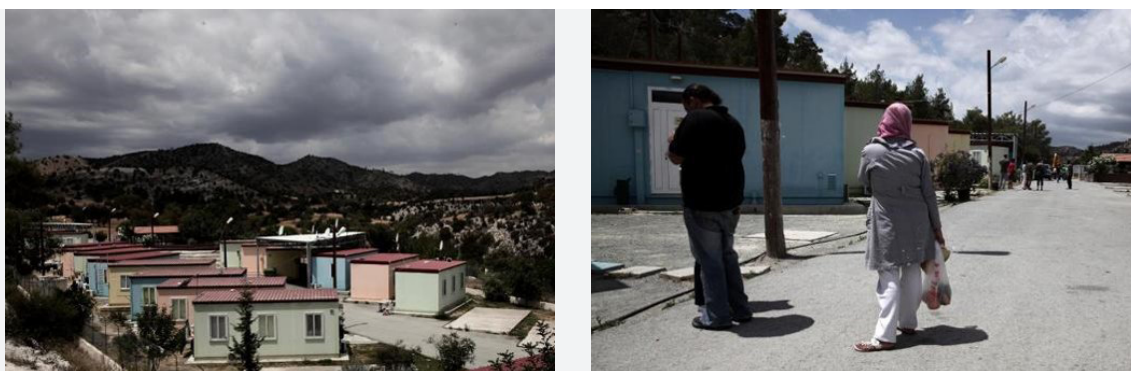
According to the same Commission paper, the complex relationship between environmental factors and other processes at work in regions of origin and destination which may drive migration (e.g. economic restructuring) make it extremely difficult to clearly pinpoint the role of change and of other related factors in individuals' decision to migrate.

Moreover, it is also pointed out that current evidence strongly suggests that most migration and displacement will take place in an intra-State context, and/or within developing regions. International migration requires substantial resources, in particular if it is inter-regional, and is likely to be a feasible option only for persons who are less likely to be seriously affected by environmental change (as they typically live in better protected areas of cities). There is a big challenge here: How to design future urban development systems and mobility networks, i.e. "streets" to better facilitate protecting the most vulnerable migrants instead of just the strongest, youngest and best connected.

## THE CASE OF CYPRUS – WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The shifting populations of migrant communities contribute to the host nations like Cyprus by providing skilled and unskilled labor, paying rents, creating new enterprises and spending remittances received from abroad. While urban refugees have never been completely absent or ignored, camp-based provision has been the mainstream traditional humanitarian response for several decades. The lack of support to displaced populations in urban areas creates chronic vulnerabilities or leaves acute needs unaddressed.

On May 12, 2014, AFP News published a report by journalist Caroline Nelly Perrot (Perrot, 2014), entitled: "Asylum seekers, immigrants find dead end in Cyprus". In her report she paints a grim picture of the status quo many of these people find themselves in (Figure 1), which is exacerbated by the physical layout and restrictions of the Kofinou Reception Center in Cyprus (Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** Aerial and ground photos of the Kofinou Reception Center (Source: Department of Social Welfare, Republic of Cyprus)



**Figure 2:** Site plan of the Kofinou Reception Center; captions read: "kiosk" in the upper left hand corner, and, "existing welcoming center for seekers of political asylum" (Source: Department of Social Welfare, Republic of Cyprus)

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

Managing population growth and designing responses to migration in the context of economic and environmental change gains more importance when analyzing the urban environment. A lot of temporary and permanent migration will be directed to cities, due to their role as economic centers, accentuating current urbanization trends in many regions. Urban centers will also face climate-related vulnerabilities, in particular as many are located in coastal floodplains or low elevation coastal zones.

The workshop, which was carried out in the 2014 spring semester, examined the destinations selected by migrants in Cyprus in terms of the economic opportunities they offer in order to gauge the extent to which migration to regions of social and environmental vulnerability is likely. Related objectives include reaching an understanding to what is really happening on the ground in the so-called “EU crisis” countries and their cities; for example, by investigating the mechanism in the EU crisis countries, by checking as well a relocation mechanism -process towards Central Western and Northern European Countries.

The findings are meant to inform cities that are critical of the way in which they meet their local and regional responsibilities toward the health, safety and welfare of these shifting populations. These findings may well contradict commonly held views that cities are parasitic and the main contributors to local and global environmental degradation. In these observations the research teams aim to base one of their overarching objectives that aspire to inform urban governance targeted at reaching spatial and social cohesion.

## METHODOLOGY OF INVESTIGATION

The methodology of investigation with regards to the workshop engaged in exchange of information with public and private partners that face similar challenges on a daily basis yet following a different planning regime that allows the stakeholders to get outside the box, drop preconceptions regarding traditional practices and to reevaluate the parameters by which critical decisions are being reached. The novelty in the methodology proposed is that qualitative and quantitative results were used in the context of mappings and spatial visualizations that characterize both analysis and recommendations.

The issue of migrating populations in a time of crisis is a multifaceted topic, which in its physical manifestation is one of profound changes to the urban fabric, especially in sustained cycles of economic downturns. For countries like Cyprus on the fringe of the European Union and often acting as gateways and first points of contact for immigrants beyond the EU they are also places that have to react, albeit through temporary measures to house expanding urban populations (Henderson & Thomas, 2002).

In fact, when times are good, major urban areas find themselves facing these forces and cycles of expansion as a result of the influx of people looking for better opportunities for work, better services and better housing. On the other hand, when times are not so good these same places exhibit the characteristics of shrinking cities as a result of outgoing populations seeking improved opportunities and conditions elsewhere (Kounnapi, 2014).

In terms of physical planning it was important to examine the issue in terms of three prongs of investigation. The first prong concerns the city and regional scale of any intervention; the second examine the typology of housing units that will accommodate the target population; and the third one looks into the design of communal / public spaces as venues of increased socialization and normalization of social networks, acceptance and diversity.

Starting with the first (Figure 3), it was important at the regional scale to avoid stigmatization of the target populations by containing them in distinctive complexes that are not integrated with the existing communities and their building stock.



**Figure 3:** Siting a proposed welcoming center in an urban rather than a rural location in order to provide and promote synergistic interaction with the local community.

(Source: Thesis by A. Kounappi, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, 2014)

These may result in discrepancies in the scale and massing of the proposed development; the simplification of mass produced units that lack flexibility in accommodating the diversity of the spatial needs of cultures foreign to the urban fabric accepting this influx of people; the connectivity of this new or in-filled part of the city to neighboring communities, services such as educational, healthcare and leisure facilities and basic retail such as groceries; adjacency and accessibility to public transportation to facilitate important trips such as the ones from place of residence to place of employment.

In the second prong it is important to understand the typology of the organization and layout of the basic housing and service units to allow for potentially a high turnover of population from more temporary lodgings to more permanent housing accommodations. The inherent flexibility to be designed into these complexes at the basic level of typologies is vital as it is going to be the one that ensures customization by the users who may be associated with very diverse living conditions that have very diverse spatial expressions (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Organizational diagrams for proposed refugee housing indicating relationship of unit-to-whole and the clustering of elements to achieve efficient and appropriate programmatic adjacencies.

(Source: Thesis by A. Kounappi, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, 2014)



Moreover at the scale of the typologies and organization of the clusters of units it is important to address those in ways that enhance the social networks that tie many of the migrant communities together and complement the socioeconomic networks in which these populations find themselves in.

The last prong of investigation regarding the physical planning challenges in this type of research and one that is indubitably connected to the two already mentioned has to do with the design and planning of the space in between mixed use building masses and concerns the collective nature of the public spaces (Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** : Spatial qualities of collective spaces acting as integrators with the local community.  
(Source: Thesis by A. Kounappi, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, 2014)

If neither the proposed structures nor the proposed public spaces are to prevent them turning into ghettos and their residents into outcasts, it is important to immediately address the right to public space and to design it in such a way that it amounts to a safe environment, accessible to people of all ages and mobility levels and most importantly, as in the case of the complexes mentioned above to be integrated with the physical layout of the existing communities so that it promotes the principles of communal ownership and maintenance, appropriation and rigorous use in a way that it may strengthen social networks among the immigrant communities and between them and the local population.

The tools that are on hand are geared towards addressing these issues allow for the evaluation of moves at the city and regional scale helping to both map and evaluate socioeconomic data with mapping techniques and to visualize information at that strategic level. They are also available to help visualize aspects of connectivity, zoning and land use. At the building scale tools such as techno-economic analyses and financial pro-formas allow as to evaluate specific typologies and to tie these into scheduling and costing frameworks that examine the more intimate scale of human co-habitation and symbiosis and other strategic characteristics of place-making and laying out street networks internal to the complexes receiving the refugees.

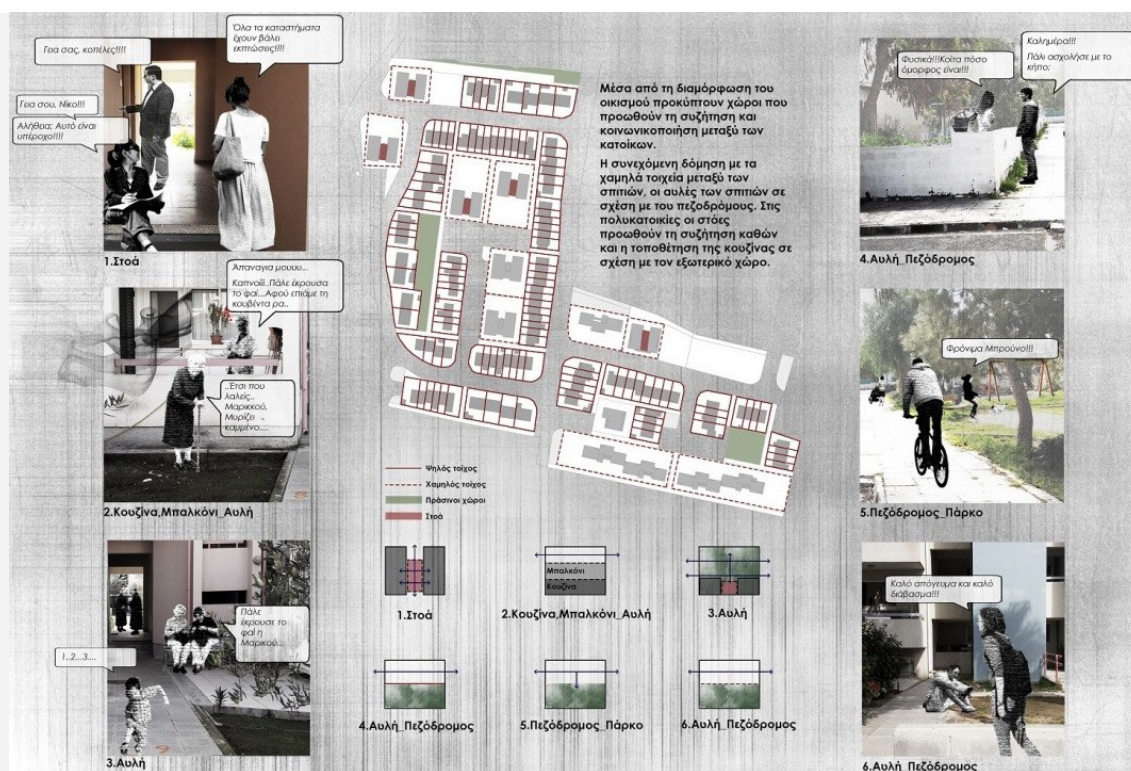
## A COMMUNITY CENTERED APPROACH

On the issues of the inclusion v. exclusion of immigrants in the urban milieu of their host nations and cities, Schuster notes, asylum seekers are excluded from all measures enacted to promote inclusion or integration because there is no desire to include those who will subsequently be obliged to leave (Schuster, 2004), with the notable exception of the “EU EQUAL” project. Funded by the Employment and Social Affairs directorate of the European Commission, this initiative is part of the European Employment Strategy and seeks to help asylum seekers integrate through education, training, advice and employment – a goal rendered extremely difficult by national policies that preclude asylum seekers from working.

Aside from this initiative, most of the attempts to include asylum seekers or to resist exclusion have come from what is known as civil society – refugee community organizations, campaign groups, church groups or advocacy organizations.

These groups provide an important counterweight to the hostility experienced by asylum seekers and serve as a challenge to the policies of exclusion and as a mediator for the co-evolution of immigrant and local societies in gateway nations like Cyprus. Additionally, they facilitate the symbiotic coexistence of these transient populations and the local communities by creating a common ground for deliberation and visioning exercises that lead to informed physical planning.

Such is the case of the aforementioned workshop existing references and student-designed additions or new construction (UCy Arch 441, 2015) as shown in Figures 6 and 7, which base the master-planning efforts on the concept of an urban village, the periphery of which may be secured without presenting an overly hostile façade to the adjacent community.



**Figure 6:** : Precedent analysis of appropriated spaces for socialization in existing refugee camps, Nicosia Cyprus. Figure blurbs of anecdotal encounters and diagrams depicting spatial relationships indicated in photos.  
(Source: UCY Arch 441 architectural workshop on housing and urban development, spring semester 2015)

Transient populations housed therein are only allowed to work on agricultural activities and they face a curfew from dusk till dawn. During those times, but also throughout the day, it is important to maintain socioeconomic connections to the adjacent community, albeit in a controlled environment.

To facilitate this purpose, the proposal suggests the use of the internal network of streets as milieus for the social life of the immigrant community that are characterized as being controlled spaces for the resident population.

These spaces are energized by service-oriented uses and light commercial areas, as well as instructional and leisure programs. The residential component is designed to assure both freedom of movement and socialization of the residents in a variety of settings, but also to ensure safety to members of this diverse population, such as families, single females and single males.

The proposals also use spatial appropriation of the internal street network to house spillover activities from the housing units and thus to increase interaction between the members of the resident population. These spaces accommodate public and private agencies and volunteer organizations that cater to the health, safety and welfare of the resident transient community of the reception center (Figure 7).



**Figure 7:** Proposed masterplan of expansion of existing refugee settlement on public land adjacent to it with characteristic "socialization corridors" into and through the site and collage of imagined appropriation of spaces. (Source: UCY Arch 441 architectural workshop on housing and urban development, spring semester 2015)

As illustrated in these examples, the potential for success would seem to be enhanced when holistic, community-centered, inter-agency approaches are adopted, supported by adequate resources and a clear political commitment. According to Philips, experience from the British and European context suggests that housing and integration strategies are more likely to work when they develop partnerships with voluntary organizations with specialist knowledge and skills, with a view to working towards more culturally sensitive mainstream provision for asylum seekers and refugees (European Commission Report, 2001; Perry, 2005). There are many positive initiatives underway, especially from within the refugee communities themselves.



However, because of the wide range of agencies involved in the housing and integration process and the uncertainties that arise from a rapidly changing policy and funding environment and exclusion of asylum seekers from the integration process, there are also many gaps in provision and support. These include gaps in the co-ordination of housing services, inadequate communication between community organizations and mainstream providers, discontinuous funding and disparities between the priorities and expectations of asylum seekers and refugees and those of service providers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Cities play a crucial role as engines of the economy, as places of connectivity, creativity and innovation, and as centres of services for their surrounding areas. Cities are, however, also places where problems such as unemployment, segregation and poverty are sometimes concentrated. Moreover, the negative effects of the current financial and economic crisis have placed the 'social cohesion' challenge at the heart of a sustainable urban development, housing, governance and strategic policy planning (Putnam, 1993), adding a more sociological approach to the debate on better urban and regional planning and design.

In Europe, one of the most urbanised continents in the world today, more than two thirds of the European population lives in urban areas and this share continues to grow. Managing the infusion of refugees in these highly dense and urbanized areas and in order to house this population within the institutional and strategic principles of sustainability, requires a combination of physical and policy oriented research on cross cutting issues such as: better physical planning, better governance in the fields population adaptation and assimilation strategies for cities of receiving and host nations, better understanding of the mechanisms of the socioeconomic and environmental factors influencing population movements and their impacts on the urban space, migration management shared visions and solutions, complementarities, linkages and partnerships.

The workshop on which this paper is based shows that despite good intentions and localized successes, there are still many obstacles to accessing decent refugee accommodations in a safe environment that is implicit in the discourse of refugee housing integration. Promising developments include plans for more holistic thinking between housing typologies and their inherent street networks where socialization and public life happen. A recent survey in Britain found that two-thirds of settled refugees (people who had lived in there for three or more years) identified housing as a priority for improving their lives (Home Office, 2004). However, there is generally a lack of information about the housing careers of more established refugees, including the transition to owner occupation. The challenge to housing providers and support workers is multi-faceted. Obstacles to progress arise from conflicting local government agendas and multiple gaps in housing provision, choice and support. Not only is it necessary to meet housing needs, but it is also important to develop practical support structures and tackle racist harassment.

Summing up, refugee organizations are often skeptical as to whether enough resources will be devoted to these initiatives to prove effective (Hact, 2004; ICAR, 2004). These positive developments must also be set in a wider legislative context and an understanding of the marginal position of the asylum seeker and refugee. The commonplace view of asylum seekers as "outsiders" and their exclusion from consideration within government integration strategies underlines their marginality. As the asylum seekers are granted refugee status and start to compete for mainstream housing, jobs and other resources, they are likely to face many of the challenges experienced by settled minority ethnic groups. Consequently, every opportunity must be taken to provide housing quarters based on masterplans that recognize streets as the primary resource for the production of public space that bonds its immigrant residents and promotes community resilience.

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## INSIDE DONG XUAN CENTER: VIETNAMESE QUASI-STREET IN BERLIN

ALBERTO GEUNA, NICCOLÒ SURACI

Freelancers. E: alberto.geuna@gmail.com, freelancer niccolo.suraci@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The street is a worldwide conventional human sign, a tool for moving and defining open space, a reassuring common feature of any major human settlement. This strikingly familiar public feature is the core of social confrontation and integration. Yet there are cases in which the street morphs into versions that question our understanding of its essence as a public space.

The Dong Xuan Center is a covered market situated in the Lichtenberg neighborhood in eastern Berlin, an area just outside of the Ringbahn at the edge of the ongoing gentrifying process. The center is named after the homonymous market in Hanoi and it is an important institution for Berlin's Vietnamese community.

The center is hosted in five prefabricated warehouses covered with solar panels within a dull industrial area from the GDR times. The anonymity of the surroundings exacerbates the exceptionality of the content: the inner space consists of street-like corridors flanked by Vietnamese shops, supermarkets, restaurants, bars and barbers. The atmosphere of specificity and otherness inside the Dong Xuan halls caused the general press to define the center as Berlin's "little Hanoi"<sup>1</sup>.

This definition is provoking because it suggests that the main feature of this de-facto shopping mall is its urbanity and its cultural specificity, as opposed to the hostility and genericity of the actual neighborhood that surrounds it.

The case of Dong Xuan center allows us to challenge the traditional definitions of "street" and "urbanity", while also reflecting on the relationship between general and specific and on the anthropological value of the street in the field of social integration.

### KEYWORDS

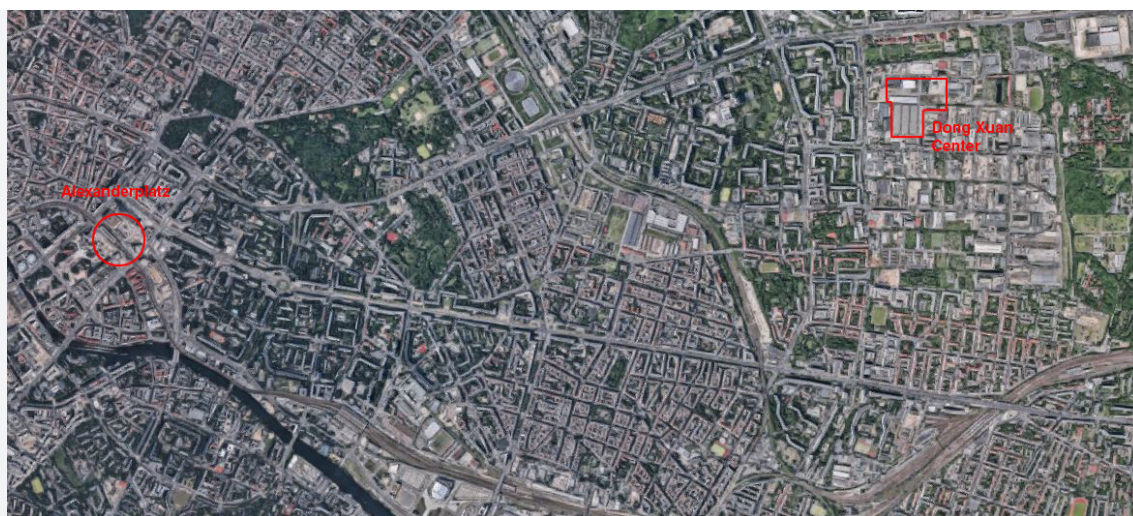
Street definition, Berlin, Dong Xuan Center

1 Flamm, S. (2013). Dong Xuan Center: Mit Haut und Knorpel. [online] ZEIT ONLINE. Available at: <http://www.zeit.de/2013/11/Dong-Xuan-Vietnam-Berlin> [Accessed 5 Mar. 2016].

## THE DONG XUAN CENTER IN LICHTENBERG (BERLIN)

During the eighties a consistent number of vietnamese immigrants arrived to East Berlin, most of them settling in Lichtenberg to work for Elektrokohle, the only producer of graphite in the GDR<sup>2</sup>.

After the Wende part of the vietnamese community remained strongly radicated in this area and, taking advantage of the opening of borders, converted its economy into an import export enterprise. The Dong Xuan Center was opened in 2005 by Vietnamese investor Nguyen Van Hien and rapidly became a landmark for the neighborhood and an extraordinary example of cultural integration. The vietnamese community transformed a private, industrial, half demolished block into a sort of public space, or better, in a small city in the city. Dong Xuan is not an enclave, rather it has open borders and no cultural obstacles.



**Figure 1:** collocation of Lichtenberg neighborhood and Dong Xuan Center (source: google maps)

The Dong Xuan Center is named after an homonymous market in Hanoi, originally built by the French occupiers in 1889 as a new architectural feature for the soon-to-be colonial capital of French Indo-China. The original covered market's main feature was expressed by the five arches that defined the facade of the complex. Made of stone, they gave access to large roofed spaces built in galvanised iron. It was known by the French as "Les Halles" of Hanoi. After a devastating fire in 1994 the whole complex was rebuilt, maintaining three of the five characteristic French-style facades, but also intensifying the interior with a general modernisation and the addition of extra floors<sup>3</sup>.

Contrary to its Berlin mirroring, the Dong Xuan Market is located in a densely inhabited area at the center of the Vietnamese capital and constitutes a common tourist attraction.

2 Esser, B. (2016). Lichtenberg, Berlin: A Sketch from the Ground — Failed Architecture. [online] Failedarchitecture.com. Available at: <http://www.failedarchitecture.com/lichtenberg-berlin-a-sketch-from-the-ground/> [Accessed 15 May 2016].

3 Anh, P. (2009). Le marché Đông Xuân et ses valeurs culturelles. Le Courrier du Vietnam.



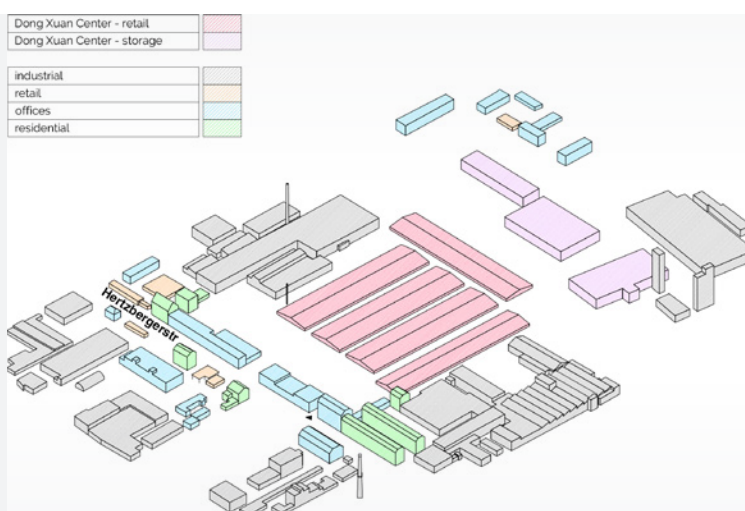
**Figure 2:** Dong Xuan Market in Hanoi (source: chodongxuan.org)

## ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (A TOOL FOR INVESTIGATION)

We consider our architectural and spatial survey of the Dong Xuan Center as a fundamental step for investigation. We specifically focused this campaign on the measurement of surfaces and volumes with the intention of creating a precise analytical basis to fuel our deconstruction process.

### Urban situation

Although the center is freely accessible on multiple sides, the main entrance gate is located on Hertzberger Strasse, where the visitor is welcomed by a prominent sign that symbolized the entrance to the area. The renovated brick building that marks the entrance of the center is also part of the Center and hosts the center's administration. The office building was part of Elektrokohle and strongly marks the rooting of the local vietnamese community to the old abandoned factory that was the main reason for their arrival in GDR.



**Figure 3:** urban context and functions

### General morphology

The main bulk of the center is composed by 8 prefabricated warehouses built on the site formerly occupied by graphite production plants. Located behind the office buildings that face Herzbergstrasse, the warehouses cover a total surface of 39 000 square meters. 28 000 square meters (Halle 1,2,3,6,8) are dedicated to retail space and are completely and

freely accessible. The rest is storage space and it is the only part of the complex that is not accessible to the general public. Most of the free surface is occupied by an extensive parking lot with manoeuvre areas for the delivery vehicles, amounting to more than 900 parking spaces. The only green area is located at the South West corner of the plot near the entrance, a small garden surrounded on two sides by the administration building.

With the sole exception of the office building the whole complex develops on the ground floor only

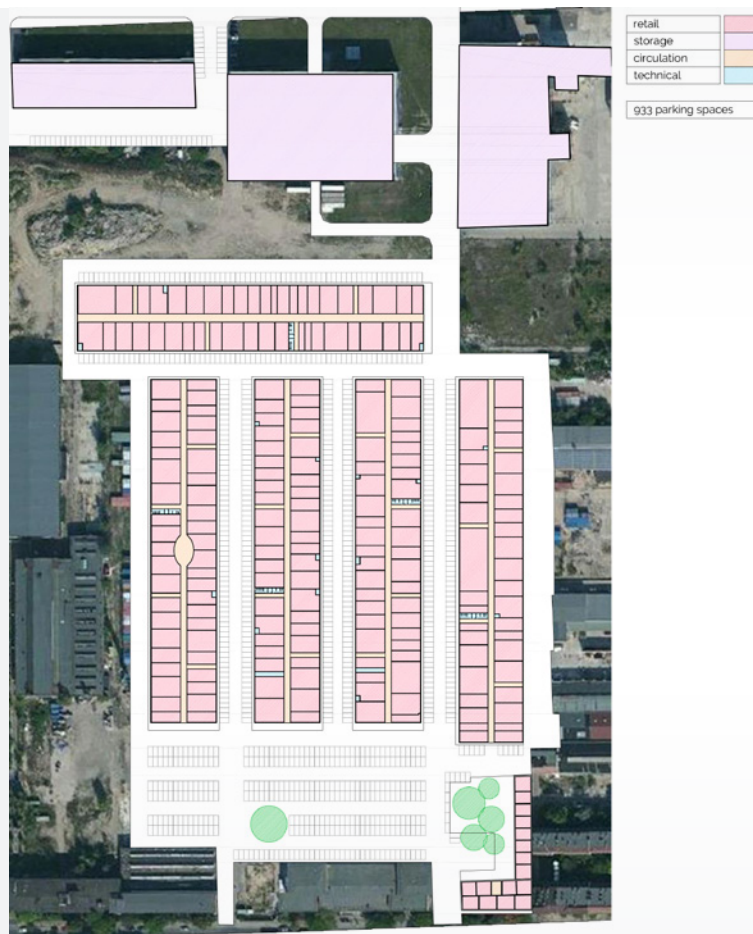


**Figure 4:**  
footprint and  
surfaces

## Circulation

In the exterior space pedestrian and vehicular fluxes are mixed. The distance between the buildings is strictly related to standard maneuver dimensions for delivery trucks.





**Figure 5:**  
functions (source:  
google maps)

The interior circulation space is organized around straight longitudinal corridors, around 3 meters wide. Transversal movement is guaranteed by small passages that also serve as access for the bathroom areas.

The elliptical square-like space in Halle 3 represents the only irregularity in this system. Exterior pedestrian only areas are limited to pavements that surround the buildings that are occasionally occupied by outdoor areas and sheds for the customers of the restaurants.



**Figure 6:**  
outdoor areas  
on the south  
edge of Halle 2



## Uses

The majority of the interior surface is occupied by retail space (73%), while distributive spaces amount to just 9% of the whole. Service spaces such as bathrooms and technical rooms are stripped to a bare minimum and amount to 1% of the total. The administrative building on the Southeast amounts to about 10% of the net floor area and it's the only pre-existing building currently in use.

The large majority of retail spaces inside the warehouses are dedicated to the sale of non-edible products (clothing, electronics, ..) and services such as nail-polishing and hairdressing. Interior streets are often used as extra space to display merchandising.

Restaurants are located almost exclusively at the South and North end of Halle 1, 2 and 3, and in correspondence with the elliptical square in Halle 3. Grocery stores are prevalent at the South end of the complex to profit from the large parking area nearby. There are currently no restaurants or grocery stores in Halle 6 and 8.

## Technological remarks

The warehouses are industrial steel truss structures. The internal height varies from 3m on the sides to about 6m at the centre. The retail units are separated by partition walls that are only 3 meters high and don't have false ceilings, with the sole exception of restaurants and bathroom areas where they are required by law. The roof is thus almost completely visible from the inside. Natural light penetrates in the buildings through linear skylights at the summit that can also be used for extra natural ventilation, if needed.

Four of the five retail buildings are covered by about 7 000 m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels, generating an estimate average of 1,39 MW of energy.

Water, electricity and artificial ventilation run in channels on the side of the truss structure. There is an extensive sprinkler fire-prevention system.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR SPATIAL UNDERSTANDING

The following observations stem from the previous survey and constitute the fulcrum of our considerations.

### Social effects of spatial and technological efficiency of the built environment

The actual spatial efficiency of the Dong Xuan Center is the result of an industrial-like spatial design strategy. Although we have no informations about the designers, we can deduce that the design approach is similar to the one of the industrial context. The industrial district surrounding Dong Xuan is composed of fairly regular blocks in which the land use is always linked to a policy of maximum usability of space. Looking at the Lichtenberg industrial area as a whole it is evident that the infrastructure follows a logic of extreme rationality: an alternation of driveways (access for users and workers), and railways (access for goods).

The construction standard of the Dong Xuan is not different, in the end. The internal corridors are the pedestrian access to the functional boxes. The external driveways are primarily necessary for procurement and vehicular access. When the two flows intersect, both are carefully safeguarded by the presence of walkways and raised platforms, which are often protected by shelters, to facilitate the loading and unloading operations.

Given this logical layout, the organization of the interior space is also the result of simple choices as solution of practical problems.

The choice of the steel portal structure is necessarily linked to the desire to cover the widest possible distance leaving the inner space free of pillars. The structure generates an internal volume greater than that required, reaching a ridge height that is almost the double of the minimum (internal height could have been slightly more than 3 m). This extra space is only marginally occupied by technical equipment (mechanical, electrical and fire), leaving it mostly empty. All technical rooms are placed in the head with one exception, linked to the central location of some restaurants.

The only thing that seems to escape this logic is the positioning of the toilets, probably related to the tracking of underground water infrastructure.

While the nature of the choices appears to be strictly economic and technological, the results often create effects that are not considered from the starting decisional field.

In fact, in the case of Dong Xuan Center, it is possible to question the traditional parameters of quality of space. Somehow in this case, as the limit condition, quality and efficiency seem to coincide. This is related to the functional program, but also to the anthropological nature of the site. The population of Lichtenberg and, more generally, of Berlin, has built a way of living profoundly linked to spatial efficiency issues. The distribution of residential slabs is extremely rational and presents abundant open space, which has been long managed independently by the inhabitants themselves in a form of understatement<sup>4</sup> in the definition of urban space. Hence the inhabitants of Berlin have constructed an anthropological form of spatial life which provides temporary employment, trading, sharing, and it's interesting how this behavioral element is absorbed by the local Vietnamese community in the context of retail space. At the same time this form of appropriation is also far from a material consolidation of private presence on public land<sup>5</sup>.

Being able to attract people from different communities and heritages,

the Dong Xuan appears as a waiver of certain mix of traditional anthropological traits, the porous and incomplete nature of the space providing opportunities for democratic engagement<sup>6</sup>. Simplifying the problem of settlement only to logical, spatial and technological efficiency, Berlin's Vietnamese community gave shape to an extraordinary integration experiment.

As European culture imported to Vietnam its model of covered market, Vietnamese inhabitants of east Berlin reintroduced it back in Europe after its metabolization. The result is a sort of resiliency negotiation, with implicit and explicit effects on the metabolism of this spatial model.

4 Team X: overdesign Vs understatement: Team10online.org. (2016). TEAM 10 Meetings. [online] Available at: <http://www.team10online.org/team10/meetings/1965-berlin.htm> [Accessed 3 May 2016].

5 Also the design of public space is historically more relevant, see for example the investigations by Camillo Sitte (Sitte, C. (1901). *Der Städte-Bau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*. Wien: Verlag von Carl Graeser.) or, more recently Jan Gehl (Gehl, J. (2006). *Life between buildings*. Kbh.: Danish Architectural Press.). In general that is expressed also in the tradition of the grand-tour.

6 This interpretation reflects the view on democratic space expressed by Richard Sennet in his essay *The open city* (Burdett, R., Sudjic, D. (2007). *The endless city*. London: Phaidon Press.)

### Interior Corridors as quasi-streets

The perception of the interior corridors as quasi-streets is defined by the intersection between their use and their dimensions and spatial peculiarities.

The corridors are filled with displayed merchandising and constitute an informal extension of the shops, resulting in a negotiated street-like space. This character is underlined by the narrowness of the corridors, where the concentration of people and objects reminds of an alley in a Mediterranean town.



**Figure 9:**  
interior street

While the surface for circulation is stripped to the bare minimum, the narrow corridors profit from a large overhead airspace that creates the impression of a city under a roof, the specific spatial quality that characterizes the traditional European covered market.

This low m<sup>2</sup>/m<sup>3</sup> ratio, as well as the intrinsic negotiable character of the corridors, allow us to read these interior pathways as quasi-streets, places where the urban phenomenon is replicated in an unlikely setting.

### Degrees of controlled openness

The Dong Xuan Center, remarkably, is almost completely accessible to visitors. All shops face the interior pedestrian quasi-street on one side and the exterior vehicular street on the other, being accessible on both sides by everyone. Except for the restaurants' kitchens and few other technical spaces there is no inaccessible backdoor. The whole issue of public vs private is thus generally managed not by erecting clear barriers, but rather by a subtle distinction between different degrees of public. One key point of this relationship is the fact that shops don't present extensive windows, but rather relatively small doors that, though always open, clearly define private space. In the same way, the main entrance to the warehouses is not a large glazed facade, but rather an opaque and quite modest door that clearly states the passage from one degree of public to the other. In addition to all this, spaces dedicated to delivery and other technical necessities are never concealed from the view of the visitor, who is on the contrary often forced to cross path with delivery trucks or people carrying large trolleys full of goods.

This lightening of spatial segregation results in a blending between the role of visitor and that of the resident: visiting Dong Xuan Center doesn't feel like watching something from the outside, rather taking part in it.

This is specifically underlined by the fact that the visitors of the Center come from different communities and backgrounds: far from being simply a Vietnamese enclave, the Dong Xuan Center has become a landmark for the neighborhood and it attracts people from all over the city regardless of their cultural roots.

### **Mixed program as urban value**

Observing the functional program as a whole it is possible to deduce that it is also characterized by efficiency criteria, as there is a clear separation of functional blocks.

In particular, the fact that the whole complex doesn't include housing is of specific interest, because it allows for a higher degree of transparency. The presence of residential space contiguous to retail, perhaps on an hypothetical upper floor, would dramatically change the public/private gradient and alter the perception of full accessibility to the complex.

Looking around the Dong Xuan Center, in its aggregate characteristics, it is possible to see that it contains an extremely varied functional program. This supports the urban value of the complex. This is not a building, but a piece of the city, which fits with the other pieces and consists of a succession of public and private spaces.

## **THREE SHORT LESSONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CITY (BY DONG XUAN CENTER)**

The observation and study of the Dong Xuan center as an urban container of social integration allows us to produce some simple final consideration. These are not generated in deductive form, but are the narrative product of remarks and critical analysis.

In spite of its quantitative basis, the investigation is finally substantialized in a discourse.

Starting from the most practical considerations and moving to the more theoretical, we try to raise three small questions that we learned from Dong Xuan Center and that could be verified on similar case studies.

1 - The presence of an abundant internal volume is a relevant factor that allows us to perceive Dong Xuan Center's interior as public instead of private space. This is not a sufficient condition for publicity, but certainly a necessary one. If the internal spaces of Dong Xuan Center were claustrophobic, the corridors would cease to be streets. The street is not simply a distribution mechanism, but a place in which there is space for everyone. Space that, in this case, can be quantified as the available airspace. This airspace is a tridimensional surface on which to project heterotopias<sup>7</sup>, and thus can be defined as an integration parameter, a common good.

2 - As cities become more and more privatized, architects tend to respond by augmenting visual transparency. But simply allowing to look inside a space doesn't mean guaranteeing its accessibility. Rather, transparency means being able to walk and inhabit different spaces, as represented in the Nolli plan of Rome<sup>8</sup>. The internal quasi-streets have the capacity to contract and dilate in accordance to the surrounding retail spaces: that happens in Dong Xuan Center as well as in traditional cities<sup>9</sup>, and it constitutes a high level of transparency.

3 - Without the constraints of strictly domestic space the Dong Xuan Center is allowed to be completely transparent, constituting a community space that doesn't qualify itself

<sup>7</sup> Foucault, M. and Vaccaro, S. (2001). Spazi altri. Milano: Mimesis.

<sup>8</sup> Nolli.uoregon.edu. (2016). Interactive Nolli Map Website. [online] Available at: <http://nolli.uoregon.edu> [Accessed 5 May 2016].

<sup>9</sup> Gehl, J. (2006). Life between buildings. Kbh.: Danish Architectural Press.

as an enclave. In enclaves the access to “external subjects” is often characterized by filters of different entity. Some parts are completely accessible, some only visible, a portion partially visible and finally most areas are totally concealed to visitors. In most traditional cultures, only a very small part of the total urban area is accessible if you are not part of the resident community<sup>10</sup>. Even in the most historic and traditional urban fabric (related to traditional cultures), there are vertical public / private gradients even among members of the same community. Dong Xuan works as a set of streets because the whole area is accessible: the same experience is available to any user.

Dong Xuan is the product of a process of cultural and social integration, the result of a cultural negotiation process that started violently in Hanoi, but that generated, as the culmination of a heterogenesis process, a little lesson on the topic of the right to space<sup>11</sup>, for the design of contemporary cities.

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<sup>10</sup> SQM. *The Quantified Home*. (2014). Ennetbaden: Lars Müller Verlag.

<sup>11</sup> Lefebvre, H. (1968). *Le Droit à la ville*. Paris: Anthropos.





## CONVERGING SPACE AND MEMORY AT BEIRUT'S NEW WATERFRONT PUBLIC SPACE

**NADINE HINDI**

Notre Dame University Louaize Lebanon. **E:** n.hindi@ndu.edu.lb

### ABSTRACT

Post-civil war traumatized cities face the unavoidable challenge of reconciling space and its memory, in relation to their history and past. The 1975-1990 civil war marked a breakpoint in the history of Beirut, which underwent the phenomenon of 'Collapse of memory' (Nora; 1989). In the framework of the reconstruction master plan, the new waterfront public space is defined by a new shoreline framing a 73 ha landfill and setting a new relation with the city fabric. A spatial divergence marks the new waterfront promenade from the pre-war 'Avenue des Français', buried gradually during war years by the Normandy dump and faded from the collective memory of the Lebanese except for postcards and photographs. Departing from the reconstruction master plan objective of reconciling Beirut's past and future, this new waterfront public space faces the bi-fold challenge of the physical re-integration to the city and the recreation of memory. This case of Beirut waterfront public spaces is another chance to approach the controversial discourse of converging space and memory in traumatic geographies based on the multi-faceted specificities of the space itself. It is equally an opportunity to question in the first place whether the convergence of space and memory remains a tangible urban paradigm in the design of future cities, whereby considering different urban design parameters becomes a more compelling reality.

### KEYWORDS

Waterfront, memory, public space, traumatic geographies

## INTRODUCTION

This paper will tackle the relation between the theme of memory and urban design solutions in the case of the war traumatized city of Beirut. While literature on memory is diverse and multi-disciplinary related to various aspects of life, the discourse on memory in this paper will focus on the relation between memory, urban space and its social practices at the post war traumatized public spaces. Discourses on memory are renewed with the advent of traumatic circumstances, loss and collective traumas (Crinson, 2005: xviii), and the process of reconciliation with 'history of violence suffered or perpetrated' (Huyssen, 2003: 9). In the same way that discourses on memory rose with events related to decolonization and the new social movements in the 1960's in the West (Huyssen, 2003: 12), and the Holocaust at the wake of WWII (Huyssen; 2003) and (Crinson; 2005), literature on urban memory tackles issues related to traumatized and divided cities. Concurrently, this implies that traumatic historic moments are catalysts that trigger themes related to collective memory and identity, as necessary tools for lingering over the design of post-traumatic urban models and contemporary urban approaches (Huyssen; 2003). The 1975-1990 civil war marked a breakpoint in the history of Beirut, which underwent the phenomenon of 'Collapse of memory' (Nora; 1989). Though the civil war was initiated in a suburban neighborhood, the fighting militias took over the heart of the capital as early as 1975 dividing it into East and West and displacing forcefully the civic society into either parts according to their religious identities<sup>1</sup>. In the framework of a socially and physically traumatized city, the reconstruction plan faces the dual challenge of converging urban space and its memory. This paper will tackle the public spaces along the waterfront as a case study and assess the capacity of the urban design to reconcile this space with its urban memory several years after its completion. Through an outline urban depiction of the space prior and after the war, the paper will shed light on the multiple aspects from the past which faded and disappeared from the new spaces. It is as well an opportunity to reflect upon the continuities, discontinuities and metamorphosing social practices and urban typologies simultaneously.

## CONTEXTUALIZING MEMORY IN TRAUMATIC GEOGRAPHIES

At the wake of the civil war in the early 1990's, Beirut suffered from both a physical divide and a social polarization. Similarly to the case of war-torn and conflicting cities like 'Berlin and Jerusalem' where 'memory comes to be a constitutive component of the facet of the city' (Bakshi, 2014: 189), urban memory constitute the link between a space and its memory. The elements for reconstructing the memory of space are both tangible and intangible. In this case the social practices represent the intangible manifestation of memory whereas the physical landscape, the buildings and the archeological remains constitute tangible representations of urban memory. This paper will contemplate the urban memory at Beirut's waterfront along a bi-fold perspective, the physical and the social dimensions. While urban memory 'can be an anthropomorphism (the city having a memory)' representing the city as a 'physical landscape' (Crinson, 2005: xiii), it is linked to its social practice, as 'memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name' (Nora, 1989: 8).

As Beirut underwent fifteen years of armed conflict, followed by intermittent events that marked its cold war aftermath, it represents one of the most traumatized cities in the Middle East at the turn of the twenty first century. During the reconstruction aftermath, the discourse on memory didn't impose itself as an imported theme, but as a matter of fact it was triggered nationally and locally by several factor. On one hand,

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1975, militia parties splat Beirut along a demarcation line into East and West halves, with concentrations of Christians and Muslims in the respective parts.

it had its roots in Solidere's <sup>2</sup> objective of reconstructing the capital under the slogan 'Beirut: Ancient city of the future', aiming at designing a city for the future 'that would have continuity with its past' (Sawalha, 2010: 36). In this sense the design of spaces aimed at synchronizing the memory of the space and its physical reality. On the other hand, this aftermath moment was characterized by the search for heritage, a common past, and a collective and national memory. In the act of 'remembering and forgetting' (Nora; 1989) both dimensions of the past and history are investigated. History appears as phase and memory as an occurring phenomenon that cannot be dissociated from its society. In parallel to designing Beirut's reconstruction master plan, a conference was held to define 'national heritage' and "popular culture' (Sawalha, 2010: 40). The participants failed to reach a common agreement but agreed within a 'collective vision' on four characteristics that define a common platform, "collective, unique, divergent and multifold'. As they failed to agree on a common identity related to the past which immediately preceded the civil war, they claimed the Phoenician roots as a national anchor from a faraway past (Nagel; 2002), and called for ongoing excavations<sup>3</sup> in the city to 'dig deeper, assuming they would reach a Phoenician layer' (Sawalha, 2010: 40). In digging into the past national memory, and excavating through the city's palimpsest, several pasts emerged dating back to the Iron and Phoenician age. At the expense of eclecticism and control of choice between which past to throw into oblivion and which past to conserve, the 'representations of the past are often distorted' (Bakshi, 2014: 190). Ironically, several new public spaces 'are organized around archaeological sites uncovered during the demolition of war-torn buildings' (Nagel, 2002: 723). These public spaces were distanced from the imminent pre-war past, and associated with a faraway cold past. The spatio-temporal representation of a space is distorted and mutilated when associated with a different past. Which reconciliation would be achieved between the physical space and its social practice, and how space and urban memory can converge across the large spectrum of the past? The case of the Waterfront public spaces will be unfolded during the pre-war and the post war urban narratives in an attempt to intersect time and space.

## AN OLD TALE OF THE AVENUE DES FRANÇAIS

The urban memory of the prewar Avenue des Français is associated with Beirut as a Cosmopolis, reflecting the image of leisure and internationalization of the 60's and early 70's. The photographs and postcards of the 1970's depicting this Mediterranean spirit is what remained in the mind of the war generation, frozen in time by the eruption of the civil war. As the post-war master plan of 1994 revealed a major transformation to the prewar seashore line of 1975, it is pertinent at this point to outline the urban evolution of the Avenue des Français. The oldest of the archived cadastral maps of Beirut, the 1841 one, proves the existence of a seaside promenade laying outside the city walls, between Bab al-Santiyeh and the old lighthouse in Ras Beirut constructed in 1862. Dating back to 1915, the seaside promenade was ironically itself the outcome of a landfill, when the Turkish undertook the demolition of big parts of the medieval Souq streets. Consequently, a bearing wall was constructed out of the resulting backfill and the ruins of a demolished Byzantine basilica to support the landfill. The seaside promenade was extended and widened over landfill around the Santiyeh cemetery to reach the wharf space (Figure 1). The promenade obviously owes its name to the French who named it as Avenue des Français, widened it and continued the Ottoman idea of embellishment

<sup>2</sup> SOLIDERE s.a.l.: stands for Société libanaise pour le développement et la reconstruction de Beyrouth; it is a private company commissioned for the planning and management of Beirut central district following the civil war period, supported from the public authorities.

<sup>3</sup> During the reconstruction excavation process, Beirut turned into one of the largest archeological site, adhering to the principles of UNESCO supervising and recording all findings. The bulldozers still succeeded in dismounting and flattening many archeological sites despite the civic campaigns.

upon their arrival to Beirut. As its name suggests, the Avenue des Français promoted an image comparable to the French styles, with its broad sidewalks, palm trees, cafés and patisseries à la Française, casinos, elegant hotels and even the one and only piece of art, le 'Monument aux morts'.



**Figure 1:** Avenue des Français La Nouvelle Jetée – Promenade Period 1920-1926 Anonymous photographer  
Source: Debbas 1997

Lined with flourishing coffeehouses, casinos, cinemas and night clubs, the promenade became more than a space of leisure and flânerie (Delpal; 1999). The Avenue des Français was first frequented by the French users and the elite Beirutis, before it gradually became one of the popular promenade destination. The multiplication and development of the hotels along the waterfront transformed it into an urban condition. The urban landscape developed along the two bays of Zaytouni and Saint Georges bay<sup>4</sup>. In the 1920's the New Royal Hotel occupied the tip of the Zaytouni bay followed by the Saint Georges Hotel completed in 1933-34 (Figure 2)., occupying another tip for what was previously known as the Ras-Beirut tip (Debbas, 1986: 113). The Saint Georges Hotel was known as the most luxurious hotel in the Middle East. Despite the absence of sandy beaches and the predominance of rocks, most of the hotels owned their private access to the waterside, producing a characteristic typology of Hotel-Beach. In the past, this privilege was used for the direct access of boats arriving from the sea to hotels individually, then following the independence period the access transformed into beaches and bathing areas. By the mid-50's an early 60's the seafront hotels identified as the 'Hotels district', rose up to an International standard, culminating with the inauguration of Phoenicia Intercontinental. The Holiday-inn, and Hilton which form part of chain hotels were almost completed as well but unluckily their construction was interrupted by the civil war outbreak in 1975.

The hotels were symbols of the golden age of the independence and the image of a city rising steadily to an international level, and succeeded in equally hosting Arab and Western tourists. The development of hotels on the waterfront constituted an integral

<sup>4</sup> The Saint Georges bay appears in cadastral maps as Ras Minet el-Hussain, it owes its name to the Saint Georges Hotel constructed in 1933-34.

part of the economy, they became recognized as the hotel sector. The hotel district was doomed as a main target during the first two-year of civil war<sup>5</sup> (Fregonese, 2009: 310) and (O'Ballance, 1998: 37), which led to paralyzing the whole sector for fifteen long years and abolishing all kind of public life. In the re-construction aftermath, Seafront hotels fully recovered except the Holiday-Inn hotel which still carries the scars of war, as well as the Saint Georges Hotel due to an ongoing conflict with Solidere about the strategic location of the hotel; only the swimming pools keep operating. They stand like a live witness and survivor of the pre-war, the war and the post-war period.

## THE TALE OF THE NEW WATERFRONT

Probably the urban tale of the new post-war waterfront starts with that of the Normandy dump adjacent to the Avenue des Français. The landfill, named after the famous Normandy Hotel facing it, started piling up since the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. It was finally shut down in 1994 as soon as the reconstruction of the city center started. It 'was the result of sixteen years of uncontrolled dumping of everyday trash, animal carcasses, unexploded munitions, and wreckage from destroyed buildings'<sup>6</sup>. While the same source mentioned the collection of 'seven hundred bombs', undocumented tales of throwing anonymous dead bodies to the sea at the landfill location remain urban myths without real evidence. Back then in 1994, the landfill constituted a serious ecological problem to the shorelines. In the framework of the reconstruction master plan, a new shoreline was designed to frame a 73 ha landfill, spatially embracing and ecologically treating this Normandy dumpsite. The reclaimed land was named the mixed use 'Waterfront District' by Solidere offered 'a model of sustainable urban development'<sup>7</sup>, presenting both the opportunity for reclaiming new land to the sea and resolving the Normandy landfill problem. The reconciliation park conceived in the original 1994 master plan, or the waterside park as it appears in 2009 Solidere's report, will be partially laying on the Normandy dumpsite.

The pre-war promenade of the 'Avenue des Français' was buried gradually along the war years by the Normandy dump and faded from the reconstruction plans. Solidere master plan design projects along its traces the 'Shoreline Walk', a sequence of four connected spaces designed by Gustafson Porter (UK), in a winning entry in 2011. The series of four spaces along the latter walk consists of the All Saints Square near Anglican church, the Zaituneh Square designed as a hinge between city and waterside, the Shoreline Gardens following the traces of the Avenue des Français, and connects to the Santiyeh Garden previously the location of the Santiyeh Cemetery. Designed at "the boundary between the historic city and the new engineered landscape"<sup>8</sup>, the element of the water is incorporated as a symbolic element, reminder of the historic existence of the seashore. The new seaside promenade is an entirely new space, already completed but unofficially open to the public. It is part of the Waterfront District, which 'when fully completed, it will contain two marinas, a waterside city park, Corniche and quayside promenades, with 29 ha of new waterside development land'<sup>9</sup>.

5 The first violent round of civil war known as the two-year-war, targeted the seafront hotel area in a famous and complex battle known as 'ma'araket el fanadek', meaning the war of hotels. They turned the highest points of hotels into strategic observation and sniper places, occupied and changed their ground floors according to the rules of fight. In brief, they turned it into a battleground.

6 306090 Architectural Journal, August 2005 Vol. 9: Regarding Public Space. By Design Bureau for Public Space. Published by 306090 Inc., New York 2005.

7 For more information, refer to <http://www.solidere.com/project/waterfr.html>, accessed 26.09.2011.

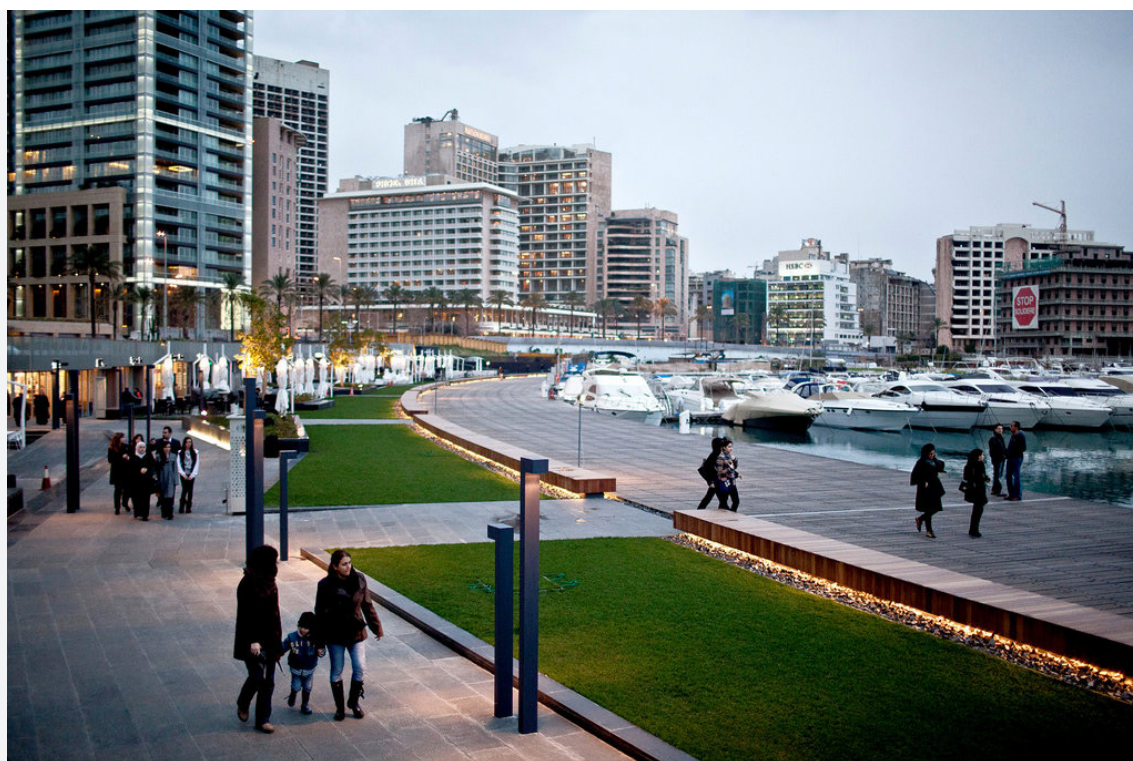
8 For more details on the projects, refer to <http://www.gustafson-porter.com/shoreline-walk/>, accessed 21.04.2016

9 For more information, refer to <http://www.solidere.com/project/waterfr.html>, accessed 26.09.2011.





**Figure 2:** Avenue Francais, 1970's; Picture showing the two bays of Zaytouni and Saint Georges; New Royal Hotel in the foreground, and the Saint Georges Hotel in the Background occupying the tips of the bays - Telko Sport collection.



**Figure 3:** The Zaitunay Bay development, which opened in December with shops and restaurants, is built on reclaimed land. Photo Credit Bryan Denton for The New York Times Feb. 17, 2012.

The new Waterfront spaces are disconnected from each other. The Zaytounay Bay is a yacht marina bordered with a wooden deck and lined with cafes and restaurants, however it is disconnected at both its ends from the surrounding (Figure 3). A new chalet structure punctuates its eastern side and almost disconnect the bay from the new waterfront Corniche, while the Saint Georges Hotel relates awkwardly to the western side of the marina. The intentional isolation of the Saint Georges Hotel due to its objection for being incorporated in Solidere project resulted in a spatial disjunction between the old and new seaside promenades. The surrounding road network including tunnels resulted in further disconnecting the waterfront district from the city.

## THE IMPERSONAL INTERSECTION OF PAST AND NEW SPACES

In the framework of urban memory set in this paper, this chapter analyzes the prewar Avenue des Français and the postwar new Waterfront following their physical aspects and social practice by finding common denominators between the past and the new space morphologically, socially and functionally. This public space along the waterfront underwent the most significant spatial transformation resulting from the reclaimed land and the construction of two yacht marinas punctuating both ends of the new waterfront promenade. The yachts marinas and the luxurious five stars hotels and iconic towers that constitute its backdrop silhouette, created a new image for this new public space, lacking any material reference with the past, except for the Saint Georges and the Holiday Inn hotel each one at an end. Forty years since the outbreak of war distanced the space from its urban memory. The civil war froze for fifteen long years the seashore public space physically and socially. By the end of war, the Avenue des Français was suspended at that bloody moment of history. In the reconstruction process, more than a decade of landfilling and designing were enough to completely fade and blur the space from the memory of the Lebanese as they once lived and experienced this space.

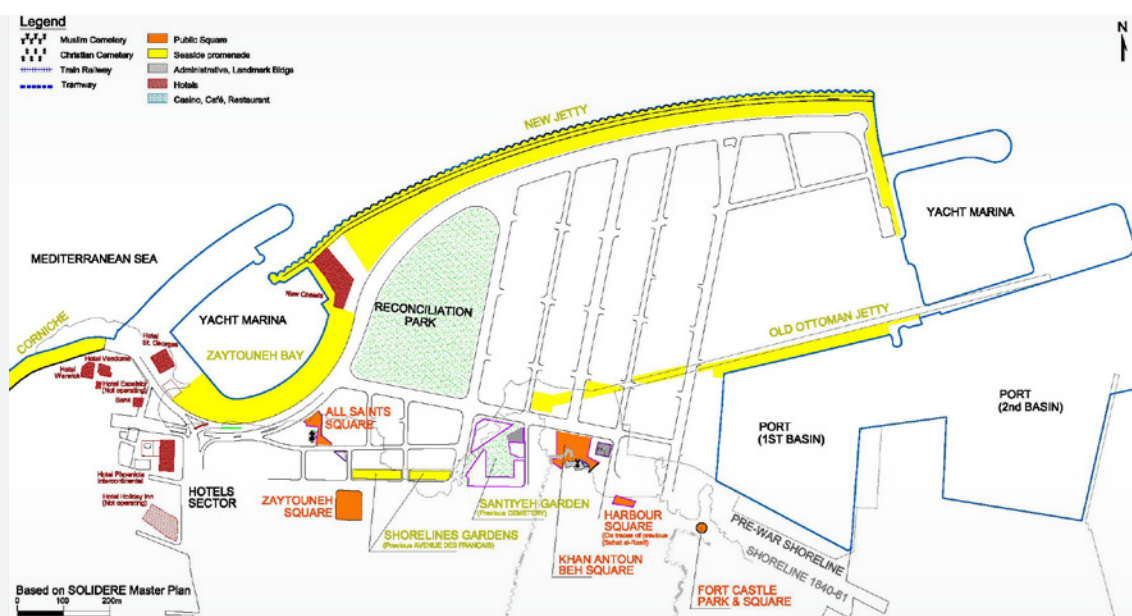
A completely new seashore line draws the new borders of Beirut central district, and the reconstruction bulldozers managed to sweep away all traces of the buildings that once bordered the Avenue des Français, except for a small church hardly noticeable among new high rises. The old space lost its typology along with sweeping away the buildings and the physical traces (Crimson, 2005: xviii). The double-bay seashore which characterized the 1975 shoreline punctuated by the beach-hotel typology and the famous hotels with direct access to the sea was transformed by the landfill operation and the new marina (Figure 4). The prewar cadastral map reveals two bays, the Zaytouni bay and the Saint Georges which owed its name to the Saint George hotel. The actual map shows respectively reclaimed land over the Zaytouni bay as the future reconciliation park, and inexplicably the previous Saint Georges bay conceded its name to the new Zaytounay Bay (Figure 5). In addition to the inexplicable toponimic swapping of the two bays, one can notice a clear changing in the spelling of both terms from Zaytouni to Zaytounay, probably attempting to accentuate a more posh area near the yachts marina, in contradiction to the prewar degraded Zaytouni area and its association with the red light district. The considerable typological change of the seashore line from 1975 till mid 2000's coupled with the toponimic confusion of swapping the two bays names, constitute an irreversible divergence from the past. The only intersection between the spaces as shown on the map is the church along the seashore and the famous rebellious Saint Georges Hotel. Ironically, the dilapidated Saint Georges Hotel stands

at the intersection between the old space and the new space, as a live remnant from an old postcard, and the only surviving physical reality that resisted the reconstruction bulldozers; it became almost a memorial by itself.

The master design attempts at keeping the trace of the Avenue des Français and alluding to the previous existence water along it in a nostalgic picturesque act. The Avenue des Français which served once as a seashore promenade, lost its toponymy and became an anonymous avenue inside the city grid. As a matter of fact, the introduction of the water feature does not evoke the practice of the space as a seashore promenade, at the risk of turning it into a collage of images assembled from different pasts, unrelated one to the other, 'exaggerating certain moments in history and concealing others' (Bakshi, 2014:



**Figure 4:** Prewar shoreline - Diagram by author N. Hindi 2015, based on the 1955 map.



**Figure 5:** Postwar new shoreline - Diagram by author N. Hindi 2015, based on Solidere master plan of 1994.



190). The new waterfront provides attractive new open spaces in a congested city, and ensures a new image to a city striving to re-locate itself on the global map, mostly for the new generations excluding the already aging war generation. 'New public spaces of the city are therefore one of the vehicles of changing the image of cities in a very competitive global marketplace' (Madanipour, 2003: 198), they become 'impersonal spaces', devoid of identity. Identity, as a set of 'subjective values' (Brandão, 2011: 19-20) have its roots in the past. Through a series of several questions, Brandão (2011) intends to identify which elements could compose the identity of spaces: the nostalgia of what were these spaces in the past, their character as 'typical', 'picturesque' or 'spontaneous', the attachment to the space, the presence of peculiarities, or the ambition to establish an image or a trademark from the institutional or commercial perspective.

## CONCLUSION

This paper illustrates how the urban memory of a space lies in its social practice and its physical components both pertaining to the same period of time. It departed from the premise that urban memory in traumatized geographies is a possible tool for associating or reconciling societies with their war-affected physical contexts, necessary for the success of space integration into future designs. Failure to converge the physical space with its urban memory will turn the new spaces into spaces of spectacle and 'impersonal spaces' in the city (Madanipour; 2003), lacking identity (Crimson; 2005) and struggling continuously to create a new image. Spaces have a memory that transcends time and is diffused from one generation to the other even when all physical traces are swept away. Failure to resuscitate the memories associated with the space, will result in fragmented designs lacking urban cohesion to the surrounding fabric. Public spaces are complex entities incorporating aspects beyond the social and the morphological, like branding, image, economy, politics, management, sustainability depending on the context and the users. It is equally an opportunity to question in the first place whether the convergence of space and memory remains a tangible urban paradigm in the design of future cities, whereby considering different urban design parameters becomes a more compelling reality. Does another line of search exist beyond the continuities and persistence emanating out of past traditions and practices? Does it respond in the first place to the original slogan "Beirut: Ancient city of the future"? Which past for which future, whose past to be reconciled with whose future?

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**TRACK 10**

# **T10 STREETS: URBAN DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Track chair | **Dr. JOANNA SAAD-SULONEN**

Aalto University

Co-chair | **Prof. GEORGES LABAKI**

FLPS, NDU

## **DESCRIPTION**

This track calls for contributions from interested academics and professionals from different sectors and different disciplines within and beyond architecture and urbanism. The objective of the track is to bring participants' expertise into both academic and strategic discussions that aim to: increase awareness about the value of adopting human-centred approaches in architecture and urban design; increase the flow and exchange of knowledge about exemplars of incorporating social and behavioural issues in design; enable the creation of a community of practitioners, including academics and practicing architects, designers, and others who are willing to promote the notion of urban diversity and social justice in the education and practice of architecture and urban design.

Social Justice signifies the fair and proper distribution and availability of opportunities, resources, and privileges within a society. The track therefore aims to build upon debates on people-environment design research and social justice in the city. These debates are currently generating lively worldwide discourse in academic and professional circles and in related disciplines including architecture, urban design, geography, planning, governance and law, and environmental psychology, and other.

Urban Diversity and Social Justice insinuate challenging injustice while valuing diversity and redressing the major inequities in societies today. The academic and professional communities have addressed social justice in various forms ranging from advocacy to theorization. For example, in architecture and urban design, theorists advocate the need for integrating knowledge on how to deal with problems and crises associated with special populations that form major segments of contemporary societies such as the children, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, and the underrepresented. In urban studies, geographers and urban sociologists call for considering the notion of 'the right to the city' and the socio-economic realities of the urban environment. While there has been a surge in theorizing social justice as it relates to the built environment, little attention has been paid to the root causes of the injustices that continue to characterize the contemporary urban context, their impact, and the ways in which such an important field can be addressed effectively in architectural and urban research, education, and practice.

The outcomes of the track will offer new insights into the current status of, and potential barriers to, integrating social justice in the process of creating built environments; a better understanding of urban diversity and social justice as they relate to the everyday built environment and their contribution to social sustainability in various contexts; ways in which they can be introduced in architectural and urban

design curricula; and a clear examination of possible tools for the application into professional design practice. These insights will have important implications on how urban diversity and social justice-based built environment education and practice can contribute to enhancing equality while avoiding spatial injustices.

## **KEYWORDS**

Urban diversity and social justice, sidewalks, arcades and shop fronts, mapping of urban diversity, democratic design, economic diversification.



# **SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANNING- A CATALYST FOR BETTER SAFETY & SECURITY CONDITIONS IN NEW CITIES: THE CASE OF NEW CAIRO CITY**

**AHMED A. KHALIL**

Technische Universität Berlin, Germany. **E:** ahmedkhalil@mailbox.tu-berlin.de

## **ABSTRACT**

'New cities' is a new strategy that the Egyptian government started to adapt in the mid-eighties as a solution to overcome the population increase in the inner city of Cairo, the Egyptian capital. In this case, the majority of city and traffic planners are still oriented to facilitate cars' traffic and to decrease the population densities. They tend to put the privately owned vehicles as their primary beneficiary; providing all means of proper infrastructure and space to serve motorized private vehicles whilst ignoring other means of transportation. As a consequence, the pedestrians' and cyclists' right of way has been decreasing and taken over by vehicles through time. Whether it is an intended end result or not, new cities attract those who are more fortunate, resulting in very low residential densities of these cities compared to their initially set targets. This car-oriented planning imposes several setbacks in the social fabric of these new cities due to socio-economic inequality. This can be clearly emphasized by discussing the different social theories including individualism & collectivism, modernization & social stratification, functional and spatial segregation. 'New Cairo' is a new city in Cairo that was selected to be a case study subject due to its strategic location with respect to Greater Cairo Region. It is considered one of the largest new cities that have been established with respect to its area and population absorption. Through studying the case of New Cairo, several challenges started to surface in terms of mobility and land use planning.

## **KEYWORDS**

New Cairo, Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning

## INTRODUCTION

In the 1970's, the Egyptian government started to adapt 'containment strategies' in order to control the inner city expansion along with 'self-sufficiency strategies' for the new communities. Those two strategies were basis for the GCR (Greater Cairo Region) master plan. In 1983, the structural development plans for GCR were based on minimizing the deficiencies of huge urban areas and adapting their potential benefits. 'New Cities' is one of the development concepts that constitutes this vision. Their aim was to fulfill the need of housing due to the rapid population growth, with the expectation to put an end to the informal growth of the inner city of Cairo (Farid & El Shafie 1996).

At this time, the Egyptian strategy was influenced by the planning theories of the American suburbs such as implying separated land-uses, low population densities, wide streets and many other characteristics that defined the 'American Dream' (Sims 2015). The planned new cities were aspired to provide the essential housing units, especially for the low and middle-income class citizens. However, with the rise of the capitalistic ideology in Egypt and the concept of privatization, the vision for the new cities has massively shifted to adapt a more capitalistic vision (GOPP 2015).

### Problem statement

New cities in Egypt enforce a state of car dependency upon its residents, due to the absence of other efficient alternatives. Consequently, several parts of these new cities have never gained the sense of viability, livability and community belonging. The streets lack the human presence and activities, which caused a significant decrease in the people's sense of security and safety.

Intra-urban migration from the inner city to those new cities was not an option for the families or individuals who could not afford to own a motorized vehicle.

Most city and traffic planners were, and still are, oriented to facilitate cars' traffic and to decrease the population densities. They tend to put the privately owned vehicles as their primary beneficiary; providing all means of proper infrastructure and space to serve motorized private vehicles whilst ignoring other means of transportation. As a consequence, the pedestrians' and cyclists' right of way has been decreasing and taken over by vehicles through time (Jacobs 1961).

The spatial configuration that results from any car oriented planning approach has direct and indirect influences on the social levels of the targeted areas. It triggers different forms of inequalities such as the inequality in the accessible means of transportation, inequality in individual identification to the society through their purchasing power and inequality of facilities and accessibility regarding space and function. The first type of inequality is explained through understanding the differences between individualism and collectivism attitude in communities and the effect of car oriented planning approach (Triandis & Gelfand 2012; Triandis et al. 1988). The second type of inequality is better understood through the theory of modernization and its effects on the social hierarchy of the community and social stratification. These two are more related to the social fabric and the social layers of the community itself (Bauman 2001; Wuthnow 1992). Finally the last type of inequalities is better understood in the different forms of functional and spatial segregation in regards to the distribution of facilities in case of car oriented development and their accessibility with respect to the different layers of the society (Steil & Owen 1934).



All these theories conclude the social dissatisfaction and segregation when planning for a certain target group, and disregarding others. Urban sprawl, functional, spatial and social segregation were results of car-oriented planning. This planning approach proved to disregard most - if not all - principles of social justice and urban diversity in any given community.

## Research Questions & Methodology

The research work aims to analyze and elaborate the different aspects that have a direct/indirect effect on car dependability in new cities from the point of view of modern mobility principles. It also aims to answer questions such as: what are the main mobility problems in New Cities and how do they affect the social behavior of the people?

## Methodology of Research

This research has been conducted through different phases using several methodologies and tools that combine empirical and theoretical work. First, there was the exploration phase, where it was important to acquire preliminary insights regarding the research subject.

Based on the results of this phase, the research questions were identified and structured. New Cairo was chosen as a case study area. The analysis phase focused on getting insights from the residents of New Cairo to the quality of living and perceptions regarding their living area. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information from the local residents of the area. In total 369 individuals participated in the survey, only 128 responses were valid to be studied.

ARC GIS (Geographical Information System) along with the official strategic plan of the city were also studied thoroughly to put hands on facts regarding elements of the spatial dimension of the city, such as land-use plan, street hierarchy, transportation routes and others.

In accordance with the information gathered, different theories were studied along with guidelines and design manuals. It was essential to compare the results of the empirical work with what design guidelines recommend and link these results with the sociological dimensions of the built up environment.

## SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANNING

Sustainable development as described by the General assembly of the United Nations in December 1999:

*“Implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations 1999).*

SUMP is an integrated approach developed by the EU. It is a planning framework that tends to combine different interrelated measures to meet the mobility demands of the people and the economic activities. The purpose in adapting these concepts aims to provide a better quality of life for individuals and potential for further social and economic growth from small-scaled businesses to large scaled ones in a long-term vision. (Wefering et al. 2013). The core of SUMP is to link the art of land use planning among with transport and mobility planning in order to design a city at a human scale. The purpose of SUMP is not prohibiting the use of private vehicles but rather promoting other modes of transportation, and gradually reaching a point where people perceive car usage as the least efficient and least desirable mode of transportation (Banister 2008).

## Difference between SUMP and traditional mobility and transport planning

Point of Comparison	Traditional Mobility & Transport Planning	Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning
<b>Target Group</b>	Vehicles and traffic on roads	People, whether in vehicles or on foot
<b>Means</b>	Separating between people and traffic	Combine people and traffic in shared spaces
<b>Street</b>	Perceives street as an infrastructure for vehicles, i.e. road	Perceives street as a public shared space
<b>Traffic</b>	Derived Demand	A final goal and derived demand
<b>Primary Objectives</b>	Traffic flow, road capacity and tolerance, speed	Quality of life, accessibility, social equity, ecological and environmental qualities, sustainability, economic viability
<b>Focus</b>	Modal focused (focuses on separate means of transportation individually), giving top priority for Motorized modes of transport, i.e. vehicles	An integration of all modes of transport, putting non-motorized modes on top, i.e. walking & cycling, and private vehicles at the bottom, i.e. cars
<b>Approach</b>	Most of interventions are based on providing proper infrastructure and physical attributes, by means of forecasting and predicting traffic demands	An integrative approach of providing and combining proper infrastructure and physical elements along with policymaking, by means of foreseeing visions for the city.
<b>Goals</b>	Minimizing travelling times and increasing speeds of traffic	Rationalizing travelling times with more reliability and decreasing speeds of traffic
<b>Planning</b>	Each sector is planned independently on other sectors	Each sector compliments the other without conflicts in approaches or final goals (e.g. Land use and spatial planning)
<b>Duration of plans</b>	Short and medium term plans, mainly to accommodate the demand at the current moment or the expected one in a medium term interval of time (10 - 20 years)	Short and medium term plans to accommodate demand at the current moment, embedded in a long-term plan that is put for the expected demand in a long-term interval of time.
<b>Target Area</b>	Within a given local administrative area	Within a given functional area with a local & regional scope
<b>Decision making &amp; planning teams</b>	Traffic engineers and experts	Interdisciplinary team of traffic experts, urban planners, real estate developers along with the involvement of different stakeholders from the public.
<b>Monitoring and assessment</b>	Poor impact assessment and monitoring system	Continuous monitoring and assessment for conditions and impacts to acquire lessons learnt for further development processes.

**Table 1** Differences between SUMP and traditional mobility and transport planning. Source: (Wefering et al. 2013)

## SUMP Social Benefits

By providing the proper infrastructure and several transportation options that are recommended by SUMP guidelines, the vulnerable groups will have the chance to integrate into the society and be mobile within the city. They may even acquire more employment opportunities since they will gain accessibility for a once non-accessible area due to limitations in mobility (Campbell & Wittgens 2004).

It is also worth mentioning that pedestrians have the power to affect the local economic status of an area. They can also prevent crime from happening with just their presence in the streets (Lamíquiz & López-Domínguez 2015).

## NEW CAIRO CITY

“New Cairo city is a pioneer city & a principal driving force for the economy of the eastern sector of the GCR & the link with Suez Canal province” - (GOPP 2015)



**Figure 1:**  
Sectorial  
divisions of  
New Cairo

New Cairo city is located in the eastern wing of the GCR. The city is divided into 9 sectors with a total surface area of 63,319.6 feddans, excluding sectors 7 & 8. In 2009, the total developed area was 43.3% of the total area of the city, which leaves 56.7%, waiting for further development. New Cairo is home for 500,000 inhabitants. It is planned to attract 3.25 million inhabitants in 2027, 4.08 - 6 million inhabitants in 2050 upon completion (GOPP 2015).

### Why New Cairo?

The strategic location of New Cairo in the eastern sector of the GCR and its connection with the regional roads give the city a huge economic and strategic importance.

The fact that it is also interconnected with the inner city of Cairo increases the tendency for intra-urban migration to the city, not only for the residents of the inner city, but also for the residents of the GCR.

After analyzing New Cairo's development processes that have been happening since the 1990's, the city has gained a huge and vital importance on the regional and the national scale. New Cairo acquires top-notch quality for certain services, such as educational and governmental services, and a city center that attracts lots of economic activities and businesses. This gives the city a huge potential for growth and to attract more people to relocate there (GOPP 2015).



**Figure 2:**  
New Cairo's  
location within  
the eight new  
towns in the  
GCR – Source:  
(Sims 2015)

Although the Egyptian government has been thriving to provide the main requirements for a prosperous and healthy life such as health, education and commercial activities, yet transportation and proper land use plan remain the two most influential aspects for successful city planning.

## Land-Use and Spatial Configuration

### Land Prices

The city has a capitalistic vision and acts as the land of opportunities for businessmen and developers. Most of the economic activities in the area depend on real estate development in the areas, especially the luxurious houses, malls, entertainment centers, hotels, spas, private schools and universities (Farid & El Shafie 1996).

This capitalistic vision caused a tremendous increase in land prices and in residential units' prices. This resulted in the decrease of affordability for certain people to relocate in New Cairo, which by its turn has already led to a case of social segregation. The official reports show that 42.3% of the total population of the area is classified as high-income residents, 48.8% are classified as middle-income residents and 7.2% are classified as low-income residents, although social housing units are present (GOPP 2015).

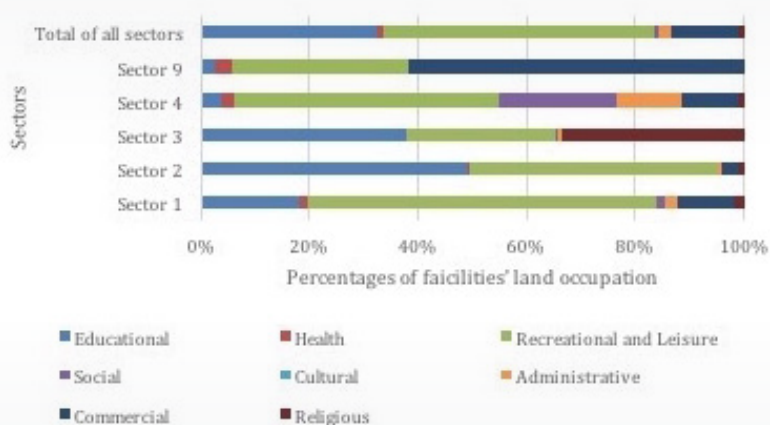
### Spatial Justice & Land-Use Distribution

New Cairo has several major economic nuclei. It is very rare to witness any major economic activity, either supermarkets, restaurants or even coffee shops outside these economic nuclei. In their strategic planning report for New Cairo city, the government states that the method of distribution of public facilities per capita is used in order to conclude whether the amount of public facilities is enough or not (GOPP 2015). However, this method is not sufficient for acquiring the best results due to negligence of the spatial dimension in the method. Spatial distribution is crucial for sustainable urban communities in order to decrease the amount of trips made and to decrease car usage per capita. It is not only about fulfilling the demand of the public for the public services, but it is also the question of how this demand is going to be supplied in order to achieve best results (City of Watsonville 2013). This is called spatial justice. It is not only about the spatial distribution solely, but the level of accessibility to such basic services or facilities also determines the level of spatial justice (Mohamadi et al. 2014).

It is mostly agreed upon in many literature work that most of the household and personal trips are done for the purpose of shopping, business (work), social commitments and educational purposes (Krumm 2012; Department for Transport 2013; Federal Highway Administration 2010).

By studying the land use maps and the spatial distribution of the different public facilities, it is obvious that there is an inefficient spatial distribution of these facilities within New Cairo, especially in the high residential density areas and old agglomerations.

There is a clear deficiency in the educational facilities in sectors 4 & 9. There is also a poor spatial distribution and a huge gap between the availability of commercial facilities in different sectors. The commercial facilities are overly provided in sector 9 and under provided in sectors 1, 2, 3 & 4.



**Figure 3:** Graph showing the distribution of public facilities in New Cairo – Source: (GOPP 2015)

## Economic Facilities

It has been found that the NUCA (New Urban Communities Authority) have imposed rules and regulations that prohibit establishing small businesses such as small retail shops, coffee shops and workshops. These prohibited micro and small-scale businesses are the ones, which generate employment opportunities in Egypt. Almost 45% of the employments are provided by these sectors, which are not entitled to exist in the new cities (Sims 2015).

## Mobility, Roads and Accessibility

By reviewing the strategic planning report for the city, it is clear that the government or the local municipality perceives roads as routes for vehicles only. Even in their goals and targets that are to be achieved, they only mention how they want to achieve a better and more efficient network to reduce traffic jams and transportation costs (GOPP 2015).

### Car-dependent mobility

The responses in the conducted survey show that 69% of the responders would have never moved to the new cities if the car was not an accessible means of transportation. Also 85% of the residents of new cities use private cars in order to commute inside the new city. Those two figures indicate and confirm the high dependency of car usage in new cities.



## Road network and connections

In order to analyze the quality of the network available in New Cairo, a preliminary 'walkshed' analysis was done on ARCMAP software, where reachability to main facilities was calculated based on distances with respect to the available network. Although, the pedestrian network is not available in most of the areas in New Cairo to establish a proper 'walkshed' analysis, it was estimated that perhaps someday a pedestrian network would be implemented in the existing road network. Therefore, it was important to shed light and have principal insights of how efficient the network would be with respect to pedestrians' circulation.

A focal point was based in the center of each establishment that represents a daily trip for most of the people, commercial, leisure, and religious facilities (Krumm 2012; Department for Transport 2013; Federal Highway Administration 2010). The maximum walking distance for such facilities was estimated to be 800 m. However, to make the results more tangible, a distance of 833 m (10 minutes' walk) is estimated to be the maximum walking distance. The analysis shows that only 29% of the total built-up area in New Cairo are being served with daily-need facilities within a 10 minutes walking distance.



**Figure 4:** analysis conducted on commercial, leisure, religious facilities and original bus stops -- Data Source: (GOPP 2015), Map Generation: © Author 2015

Distance (m)	Time (min)	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	TSA <sup>1</sup>	TBSA <sup>2</sup>
<b>83.33</b>	1	2,389,741	1%	2%
<b>416.66</b>	5	12,836,777	3%	9%
<b>833.33</b>	10	25,794,320	6%	18%
<b>TSA Covered</b>		41,020,838	10%	29%

**Table 2:** Walkshed analysis detailed coverage areas and percentages for different facilities – Data Source: (GOPP 2015), © Author 2015

The results indicate a major weakness in the city network and planning. The small coverage was due to several reasons.

1. Grid networks are the most efficient in terms of transit systems and also in terms of accessibility and reachability (Walker 2010). New Cairo's road network structure is far from being grid-like. It is more of a hybrid structure combining a linear axis based structure with a tree and cellular structure in the branches. This hybrid form makes the distances covered to reach a certain point longer than in the grid-like structures.

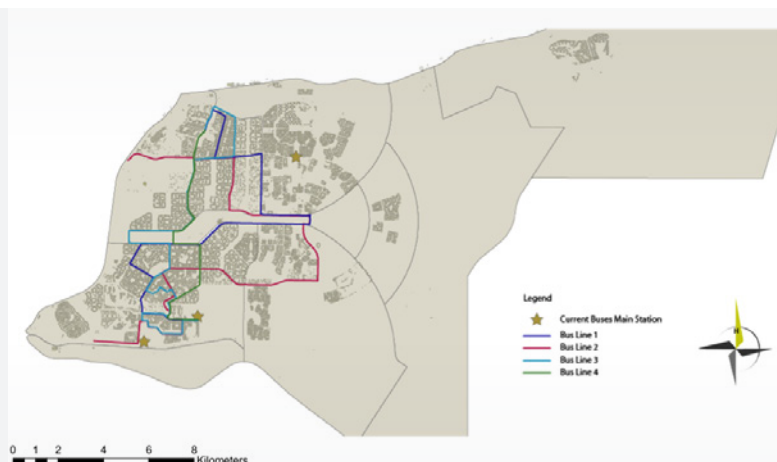
1 TSA: Total Surface Area

2 TBSA: Total Built-up Surface Area

2. There are many gated compounds in New Cairo city. This forces pedestrians and even car drivers will need to go around those gated areas, thus increasing the time and distance traveled to the final destination.
3. The spatial distribution of the commercial, leisure and religious facilities, is based on the number of residents rather than the coverage areas of these facilities. This also results in the long distances that the residents of some areas need to travel to get their daily supplies.
4. Some of the activities indicated in the above map are located inside some of the gated compounds, meaning that they only serve residents within their premises only.

## Public Transportation

In the official GIS map, it is mentioned that there are four bus lines passing through the different areas in New Cairo (GOPP 2015). There are also the minibuses, which are operated by individuals. They can be regarded as a private mean of transportation providing the service for the low-income people. This mean of transportation, although its private, but it is regarded as public for many.



**Figure 5:**  
Internal Bus  
Routes for New  
Cairo – Source:  
(GOPP 2015)

Additionally, private compounds, such as al-Rehab and Madinaty, provide buses for their residents that transport them from those compounds to the inner city of Heliopolis and Nasser City and the other way round. It is also possible for the people who do not live in these compounds to use those buses, but for a higher fare.

It is worth mentioning that there are no bus stops available in the area. Also when interviewing residents in New Cairo, they mentioned that there was no specific schedule that one can rely on or plan his daily trips on.

## CONCLUSION

Most of the areas in new cities in general and in New Cairo in specific are still under development. In addition, a completely new generation of new cities is currently under development. Those two facts urge the need to study and analyze the current status of the already developed areas in new cities and criticize them. In accordance, the undeveloped areas and the new generations of new cities should be planned and developed in a way that ensures not repeating the same mistakes again.

It has been shown in this research work that new cities in Egypt in general and New Cairo in specific have several deficiencies in the built environment and urban policies regarding mobility, safety and security that cause social injustice and segregation. Several reasons may have led to these deficiencies; the three most influential ones are:

1. The absence of an efficient transit system that can serve the new cities in general and New Cairo in specific. This led to the poor intra urban migration phenomenon of potential residents to the new cities, especially for the low-income people and those who cannot use private vehicles due to either a physical disability or lack of financial affordability for getting one.
2. The allocation of facilities such as public schools, hospitals, universities and groceries, in remote areas that are not reachable except for motorized means of mobility, either private or public. The lack of an efficient transit system in the area makes the complication worse.
3. The prohibition of establishing micro and small-scaled business, which eliminated any chance for the existence and the survival of low-middle and low-income families in the new cities along with making the city more vibrant and alive with pedestrians and cyclists (Sims 2015).

All of these aspects have led to different forms of social and functional problems, specifically functional segregation in terms of their financial and location accessibility to public facilities.

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# CITY STREETS AND THE REVOLUTION AS FESTIVAL

**ILEANA APOSTOL**

Nethood Switzerland. E: ileana@nethood.org

## ABSTRACT

Contemporary city streets have been recurrently the stage of urban struggle for ‘the right to the city’, how Henri Lefebvre called in 1968, and then used to structure over time, his understanding of the cry for democratization of urban space. From Lefebvre’s work I elaborate in this essay in particular on the right to difference –a perpetual struggle necessary to generate living space and an essential right to the city ‘whose only justification lies in its content’– as well as on the differential space that accentuates differences, and is generated through various forms of political action. In context I frame as everyday citizen activism, the resistance to the mainstream urbanization through alternative lifestyle choices and through small, sometimes informal actions within the everyday spatial practice, which enables urbanites to claim the right to the city.

At the same time, I bring to the fore some of the community actions within the movement of developing the so called ‘young urban cooperatives’ in Zurich, Switzerland. They aim at renewing the urban society, including various forms of urban living, and do focus in recent years on a specific vision of socially integrated neighborhoods. I argue that these political processes shape their own representational / lived spaces manifesting before the development of material space, and that in their search for localization, the city streets play a crucial role. In this manner I come full circle to Lefebvre’s thought, who developed a perspective on social change, before engaging in the 1968 street unrest and writing *The Urban Revolution*, through the notion of revolution as an incessant popular festival.

## KEYWORDS

Right to the city, difference, cooperatives, urban commons, revolution as festival





# INCLUSIVE HORIZONTAL AND EXCLUSIVE VERTICAL – SPATIAL PRACTICES OF EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION IN SKOPJE

**OGNEN MARINA**

Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia.

E: [Ognen.arina@arh.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:Ognen.arina@arh.ukim.edu.mk)

## ABSTRACT

The political narratives of the project for re-shaping the Skopje city centre named “Skopje 2014” have transformed the identity and imagery of the public domain in the city, exercising the elitist approach and social and other exclusion from public spaces. The spatial and formal practice of this urban project has provoked emergence of new opposing spatial practices. In the context of contemporary urban societies that has become highly polarized and compromised with inequalities and impaired social justice, we argue that spatial practices within cities coincide with political practices representing the exclusive and inclusive policies. The actions against the exclusivity of the public domain and reduction of inclusive political policies have exercised horizontally structured and temporally managed organization that conceptually and practically oppose the vertical and strongly hierarchically subordinated structure of the exclusive policies of the local government. The series of civic activities, governmentally supported projects, artistic interventions and new forms of exclusion and inclusion have been explored as a potentially important addition to spatial knowledge that could help us make our cities better and more inclusive.

## KEYWORDS

Exclusive, public space, spatial practices

## RE-POLITICIZING THE CITY

In the global era the city has re-emerged as a place of the major social and political practices reconfiguring or at least challenging the existing social order. The city and the dependent urban regions are the locations where major trends materialize as an emanation of the everyday social and spatial practices of citizens and civic institutions. But it is just a recent fact that a city is recognized as a heuristic space – a space capable of producing knowledge about some of the major transformations of an epoch (Sassen, 2011). These spatial evidences in cities, even when not only urban, spatial or material, can provide a solid knowledge for better understanding of the processes that are shaping the society.

The spatial form and spatial practices of the cities have always been associated with the socio-political order and thus political orders are historically, also spatial orders (Stavrakakis, 2007). It is a spatial emanation and a result of political concepts, shaping the vision of space, urban imagery and spatial practice in the urban society. The Greek polis seems to paradigmatically unite both dimensions where the city indicates the indissoluble link between the urban form of the social community and the autonomy of the political decisions which are structurally characterized by the urban form. In the Greek idea of polis and the Roman one of *res publica* the concepts of polity, politics and policy tend to converge in the very idea of the city: it is the city that simultaneously represents the place, purpose and practices through which the political can deliver for the community (Tebaldi & Calaresu, 2015).

It is thus not a surprise that the challenges of contemporary politics emerge and acquire presence in space and even more, thinking about politics without some reference to space seems to corrupt and compromise its conceptual and practical relevance. It is worth noting that the idea of space here should not be reduced merely to its architectural/planning interpretations or even the formal materialization of a single agent, but should include every use of space as a representation of the social aspect.

The recent global financial crisis has surpassed the economic aspect and emerged as a social, environmental and spatial crisis with devastating effect on the social structure of society. In a context of contemporary urban societies that fact has created highly polarized political and conceptual arena with compromised legitimacy of the ruling elite and urgent need to change the role of the marginalized and suppressed. Hence, in a society ramified by inequalities and impaired social justice the present fixed and conservative spatial practices become obsolete and the manifestation of power through architecture and urban space finds itself confronted with novel organizational structures and mobile practices defying the traditional and symbolic exercise of politics in an urban space. We argue that spatial practices within the cities and in particular in Skopje coincide with political practices representing the exclusive and inclusive policies, thus re-creating the city as a place and space for the main political processes.

The political narratives of the project for re-shaping the Skopje city centre named “Skopje 2014” have transformed the identity and imagery of the public domain in the city, exercising the elitist approach and social and other exclusion from the public spaces. The spatial and formal practice of this urban project showcased the disintegration of the complex social strata of public and private space into “sanitized” social hybrids and has provoked emergence of new opposing spatial practices. In the case of “Skopje 2014” project, the spatial and formal practice of the ruling elite has become especially relevant, given that the production of symbolic meaning in Skopje has been developed as if there had been nothing there before and oblivious of any historical circumstances and critique.

## SPATIAL PRACTICES IN CITIES

The link between the form of the city and the form of the society is best described by the concept of spatial practices that are socially relevant. The inherent spatial nature of political concepts and social emergence coincides and sometimes creates the spatial structure of the city framed by its form. The spatial practices of everyday life are not based on the rational or formal structure, but according to de Certeau, the city is a complex and barely visible conglomeration of the patterns of its users and their social praxis (de Certeau, 1984). According to Bourdieu the social praxis refers to the relationship between the human and the world that comprises all the acts that we perform in relation to the external physical, but most of all social reality (Bourdieu, 1990). In that sense, this relationship between space and social practices could not be tackled without a strong focus on spatiality of the process and the spatial manifestation of citizens' acts in the cities (Marina, 2015). This position is similar to de Certeau's persuasive treatment of the planners' view from above that reveals the rigid grid organization and formal order of the urban space depicted by crosscutting streets at right angles and the act of transgression of this order by walkers at the street level whose trajectories cut through the planned corridors of movement (Ward, 2000).

In the words of Boeri to describe the urban environment in a convincing way, we must allow space for the voices of multiple subjects and interpretation angles without trying to condense them into a single narrative or a meta-discourse (Boeri, 1999). Moreover, even when the emergence of the new social structures requires dislocation of the previous hegemonic order, it still must acquire a spatial representation of its own. In the words of Lefebvre "new social relationships call for a new space" (Lefebvre, 1991:55) and if no spatial innovation occurs, if no new space is created - there must be a failure in the transition (Lefebvre, 1991:51).

This process is not pre-given and could not be considered that all the manifestation of the citizenship or institutionalized action even when it is bottom-up driven are unconditionally and uncritically good and in favour of the values and members of the civic community. Critique of the contemporary rhetoric of bottom-up strategies for the informal city refers to the most radical instances of social newness that emerged within the crisis of modern forms of labour (Aureli, 2009). These radical political actions today take the form of informal social behaviours that escape intelligible forms of political life.

With the intensification of urbanisation outward and inward the urban territories a sort of socio-spatial explosion and implosion occurs as institutions, policies, urban practices, infrastructure and social and spatial networks are projected into and across the non-urban realm surpassing any differentiation between the form and the territory of the city (Lefebvre, 2003). Through this process of concentration and dispersion across places, territories, scales and morphologies new patterns of behaviour emerge, creating novel socio-spatial arrangements. These new urban conditions impose new constraints upon the use and transformation of the built environment, posing potential dangerous inequalities and conflicts, but at the same time providing new opportunities for democratic and plural appropriation of urban spaces. Such spatialisations are important in the recognition of diverse practices of the dominant groups exercising power through formal and spatial actions in cities, but even more it is important for facilitation of emergence of different identities of emerging or excluded groups showcasing the difference and antagonism in the society. There is a profound challenge of the legitimacy and recognition of genuinely constructed spatial practices in the cities and political interventions utilizing the differences through the technocratic solutions levelling the

tension through tempering the process of representation in space. In that manner, the once underground form of protest and rebellion becomes main stream and inspires advertising rhetoric and on the other side, critical discourses and artistic practices use over-identification and exaggerate the institutional forms of behaviour to oppose and destabilize the hegemonic attachment. Hence we are experiencing colonization of the alterity, of the heteron, so important for the creation of the city's political and spatial experience, with the normalizing experiences and practices that should calm every crisis resolve in an impartial manner every antagonism and abort political explosions (Stavrakakis, 2007).

In this sense, it is more than important that we can recognize the emergence of new spatial practices in our cities which provide space for different representations of the politics in the city, addressing the considerations and needs of the citizens in a social and spatial manner and in its best attempt for improving the politics of welfare and quality of life of the local community. Hence, there are certain necessary spatial considerations for constructing effective citizens' participation in creating politics and policies in the city that we could map and learn from this newly acquired knowledge.

## **SPATIALITY OF INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE IN CITIES**

The tension between the cities acting as a spatial context of civic life has become additionally poignant with the relation between the public and the private that cannot anymore be clearly defined. Instead, the contemporary public realm exists with many gradations of social activities and praxis of citizens with overlapping between the public, collective and private notions of space in the cities. In a pursuit of a more effective and efficient government on the local level many societies involve civic engagement as a concept that is a fundamental component of a healthy democratic society. Actively involved and engaged citizens in the social practices that provide improvement to their communities is essential for a vibrant civil society and is the main indicator of healthy communities and satisfied citizens.

The actions against the exclusivity of the public domain and reduction of inclusive political policies have exercised horizontally structured and temporally managed organization that conceptually and practically oppose the vertical and strongly hierarchically subordinated structure of the exclusive policies of the city government.

In an era marked by protests against the form and formality of the utilitarian urbanism, the concept of horizontality has been introduced as a result of the growing fascination with the generic horizontal space of urban development. In that sense horizontality is usually associated with the idea of the non-figurative field in architecture and urbanism or rather as an opposition to the mere figurative expressions of dominant social and spatial representation of the ruling elite. Within this stance urban space and architecture is appreciated for its organizational and programmatic attributes and not for its figurative qualities. According to this, the contemporary city is a vastly stretched horizontal plane of field conditions rather than a collection of vertical figures or singular and exclusive buildings (Turan, 2013). In a time of globalization and connectivity the concept of a horizontal field is a suitable metaphor for a seamless social urban space that embodies all the spatial practices in it. Its inclusivity is inherent to its nature and in the same time it is a tool for integration and diffusion of the practice shaping the city. In the words of Andrea Branzi, the architecture is seen rather as an activity which is less figurative and more enzymatic i.e. which transforms the territory horizontally ... closer to agriculture... because it is the culture that is horizontal, spread out that does not define the boundary that can change.

It is a territory that is almost infinite and that changes over time, but which has never produced a “cathedral”, in other words, a powerful symbol” (Branzi, 2006).

In search for a horizontally distributed inclusivity of the territory of contemporary cities that will never produce or emanate the singular objects and symbols of power we will observe the spatial practices in Skopje, exploring not just the political but also the architectural capacity for change.

## EXPERIENCING THE POLITICAL, CREATING THE SPATIAL

### Fixed narratives of exclusive spatiality

With the change in the political and social system in the 1990's, followed by the transfer and re-examination of property regulated by the principles of commercialization and privatization, the urban and social landscape of the city has become even more conflicting. This condition, oddly enough, will lead into the “re-invention” of an urban image and un-scruple consumption of public space. Almost one century after the first urban plan for the city of Skopje a new governmentally financed urban project titled “Skopje 2014” was promoted. Its main purpose has been to “re-construct” the identity of the city and of the nation as a historical legacy to the urban territory and memory by constructing institutional buildings in the centre of the city and “normalization” of the public space in the centre of the city by introducing new standards of what has been denounced as a desirable public behaviour (Marina, 2013). “Skopje 2014” urban project ended up reducing the complex structure of the city to a semantic nightmare and politically banal image with a dubious meta-historical narrative behind it.

The everyday practice proves the “Skopje 2014” imaginary narrative to be an impoverished and oversimplified representation of reality, while spatial practices invariably reveal those contrasts. The differences between the historic layers of the city and the memory of the past have collapsed into a unique and repetitive imagery of the national grandeur exclusive in its existence and emergence (Janev, 2012).

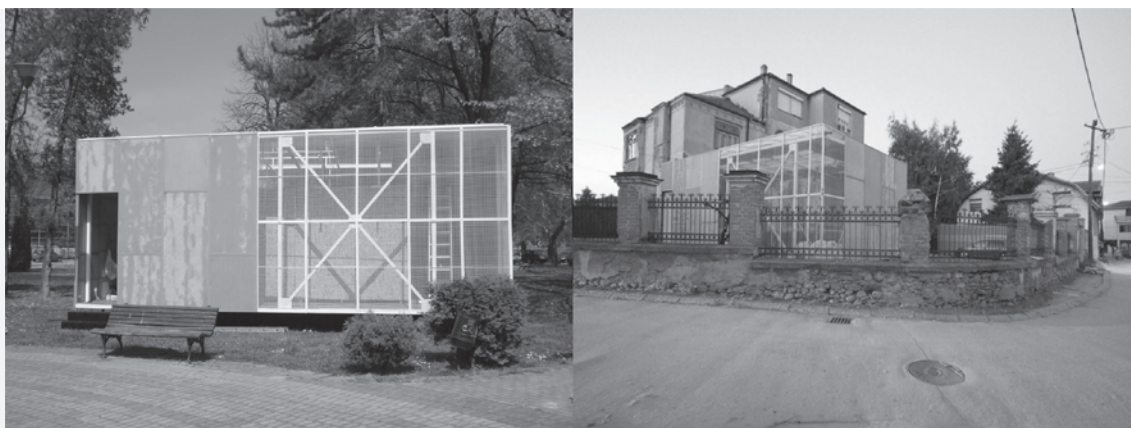


**Figure 1:** New building of Archeological museum in Skopje (left) and Gate Macedonia (right)

In the practice of this urban project we can see the emergence of a politically dubious process that disintegrates into two dimensions, the formal one of aestheticization of the public and the authoritarian one that appropriates and transforms the public and private space into “sanitized” places (Figure 1). The former concludes in the process of museumification or mediatization of the space due to the intention to eradicate the



differences in the urban space and to introduce a dominant political, social or even national paradigm, bringing the narrative of the urban identity to the level of banal representation (Figure 2). The latter is established with the urban space “normalization” where all the differences and elements that deviate from the publicly declared standards of what is socially and politically accepted as a norm and normal should be eradicated and are not socially acceptable. This political and aesthetical sanitization of the public domain through promotion of the single socially and politically acceptable behaviour is enhanced with the propagation of an eclectic architectural style as the only acceptable way of articulating the architecture of the national and therefore urban identification.



**Figure 2:** Facade of the new building of Archeological museum in Skopje (left), Monument to the fallen hero (middle) and Entrance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (right)

It is neither a proposal for a new city nor a utopian vision for a transformation of an existing city, but a clear consequence and materialization of the social disambiguation and disappointment in the power of politics to cope with the needs and challenges of society in solving the problems while providing new visions of the future world. It is also a disillusionment of the power of architecture, freed from the influences of urban context and drawn to the level of banal shape-maker that could not produce differences in the space. Finally, it is evident that “Skopje 2014”, being a politically poignant project, implemented by constructing many new buildings in the centre of the city, in its essence, refrains from architecture, and only attempts to architecturally frame the political project of a society faced with an identity crisis (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Change of the facade of the building from brutalist style to neo classical

One of the most prominent examples of transformation of buildings and public spaces in Skopje is the transformation of the facade of the building of central government in Skopje. The original building was built in 1970 and designed by Macedonian architect Petar Mulichovski. It was a modernist building with concrete brut elements (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** . Building of the central government of Republic of Macedonia before the transformation (left) and after (right)

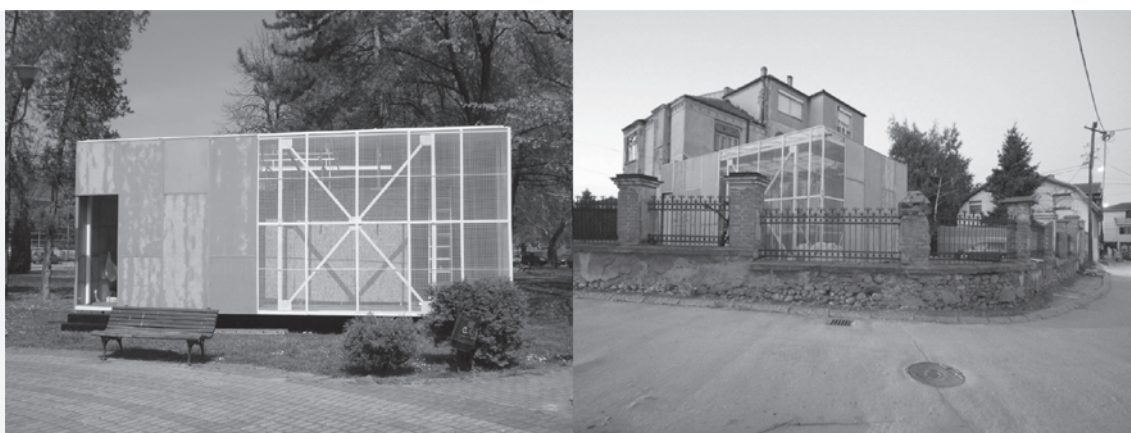
Its specific structure of concrete cores that supported the ensemble of six objects elevated above the ground was used in order to provide space around and below the building main elements; hence the public space and the image of the accessible and inclusive institution was inherent to the nature and spatial appearance of this building in the urban structure of the city. The transformation of this building within the “Skopje 2014” project meant not just the substitution with the new façade in eclectic neo-baroque style but most importantly the addition of the impenetrable fence around the building preventing the citizens to use the public space and emitting a strong message of exclusion as a dominant spatial practice of the political elite rattled with its own existence and identity.

This new urban reality shaped by the fixed and conservative spatial and formal practices and actions in Skopje is strongly opposed by the new and innovative spatial practices. These actions that emerge as a new urban tactics of appropriation of social inclusion and visibility are in the focus of our research. The series of civic activities, artistic interventions and new forms of inclusion have been recognized and explored as a potentially important addition to the spatial knowledge that could help us make our cities better and more inclusive.

### **Diffusion of the inclusive horizontality**

The conservative and fixed narratives of the governmentally sponsored project and resulting policies of state institutions that reflect the closed and exclusive approach to different layers of the society and culture have induced a resulting response in the domain of architecture. This response opposes the eclectic and rigid view on culture and art in the society promoted by the state funded institutions like museums and art galleries emanating the corresponding image to the dominant ideology poignant with symbols from the past and national mythologies, usually depicted through meta-historic formal and spatial practices that should provide legitimacy of the present through (re) constructed and virtual past. In a situation like this the question is what could actually oppose such a dominant and yet rigid practice. In Skopje the answer was two folded both in the domain of architecture and its associated spatial practices and the social and political structures that have emerged within this opposition.

CAC (Contemporary Art Center - Skopje) in 2014 constructed and promoted a CAC mobile gallery. The mobile gallery of contemporary art is a project funded with an intention to provide an alternative space and place for presentation of art and artistic practices that are not recognized and supported by the formal and national institutions in the field of contemporary arts in Macedonia. The gallery was designed to be mobile and easy to dismantle in order to stay at same place up for 3 to 4 weeks at the most (a period sufficient for 3 to 4 projects). After that the gallery changed its micro location. The cost of its construction was 7000 Euros (approx. USD 9700) and the main idea behind this project is to provide a space where institutionally restricted artistic practices and artists could exhibit their works or organize events. The gallery's measurements are 5 x 9 x 3.6 meters, and it could be transformed from a closed to an open space - depending on the needs of a specific art project or event, being available "on demand" for all interested artists or cultural/civil society sector operators all across Macedonia (Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** CAC mobile gallery positioned in Skopje (left) and Bitola (right)

CAC mobile gallery is an architectural response emanating into an object with a specific regime and spatial presence that its existence does not restrict to a single place. It is a flexible and yet tangible enough to represent the opposition to the dominant artistic and curatorial conservative praxis of the state funded institutions restricting the access for the broader and more diverse artistic community to the institutions, while enabling through its mobile and horizontally distributed existence an extension of the space for diverse artistic action and providing public space for different views and spatial practices. The inclusive horizontality of this spatial practice in Skopje proves to be very successful and productive.

A sort of a social counterpart to the architecturally shaped response to state institutions' rigidity and the imposed restrictions on creative social practices, structured in the mobile art gallery is the emergence of the variety of civic groups, usually initiated and related to a specific protest and civic discontent with government policies and practices. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis in Europe, protests and civic unrest have been erupting in the Balkans and specifically in 2015 in Macedonia due to the allegations and suspicion of corruptive actions by the central government challenging all major policies promoted by the de-legitimized political elite (Figure 6).





**Figure 6:** Student plenum protest in 2015 (left) and civic protest in 2016 (right)

The emergence and the nature of these protests have challenged some authors (Sticks and Horvat, 2014) to rethink the categories used to explain the social, political and economic context of the protests. It is also compelling to reconsider the nature of state institutions, their weaknesses and failures, and the regimes that are in power in the post-socialist period marked by a never-ending transition. These power structures have proved to be very fragile and non-resistant to the weight imposed upon them due to their inherent contradictions and hence institutional instability and social vulnerability. The fact that these actions are against an elusive opponent – regimes that are much harder to define since there is no single-faceted manifestation of the same and more often they are not characterized by open repression makes these occasional expressions of protest to be very volatile followed by confusion and contradictory political messages. But it is precisely the organizational structure of these movements emerging as horizontally organized plenums that turns them into a powerful tool for opposing the strong and hierarchically organized opponent such as state institutions. The examples of students' and other plenums that exercise such an organization have proved to be a fertile ground for experimental practices with occupations, direct and horizontal democracy. The spatial manifestation of their actions ranging from occupation the University campuses to protest walks throughout the city have been diversified with the invitation to all citizens to join them in a debate about education, culture, freedom of speech and other issues of public importance and in addition to decide about the course of the protest day by day in an open and inclusive forum where each member of the horizontally organized plenum has the right to contribute to their future actions.

The social and spatial practice of horizontally distributed inclusivity give rise to movement for direct democracy, which is seen as the necessary corrective of electoral democracy and partitocracy and possibly an alternative to it. However, without protests or any other action, the plenums have lost their potential to apply pressure and without plenums the protests have lost their legitimacy and articulation (Stiks & Horvat, 2014). The lack of more specific and creative or at least symbolic spatial practice in the political and spatial domain of cities has prevented the plenums from achieving more significant goals where the ultimate realization of this practices could be seen only through a means of political organization that puts them back within the existing and disputed structure of power distribution.

## Spatial creativity and new urban drifting

Radicalizing and idealizing the transitory aspects of the political event and action in cities, the emerging and new spatial practices has gained the capacity to deliver social and political relevance through collective creation and yet to remain efficient and transparent. These spatial practices are mainly the act of protest or discontent with the dominant social and political elite opposing it through forms that are beyond the structure of the exclusive systems of power distribution and gaining its strengths from the inclusivity of the everyday, additionally reinforced with the repetitiveness and omnipresence of the acts of protest in almost all layers of society.

The key for understanding these new urban spatial practices could be found in the description of the unitary urbanism that dates back in 1958 and that will become the guidelines for the Situationist movement. Condemning the banality of the dominant utilitarianism in urbanism, it devises a new role for the urban scene where "... The appearance of the notion of relativity in the modern mind allows one to surmise the experimental aspect of the next civilization.... On the basis of the mobile civilization, architecture will, at least initially, be a means of experimenting with a thousand ways of modifying life, with a view to a mythic synthesis." (Heynen, 1996). In this respect the spatial and social practice of cities of the future will be created through continuous experiments in new modes of behaviour. The technique of choice will be the traversing urban environments through *derive*, or aimless drifting. The detailed instructions for carrying out *derive* correctly is as follow: it should take a fixed amount of time (preferably twelve or twenty-four hours) and involve a group of people whose path is determined by a combination of system and randomness, conscious choice and chance (Debord, 1958). The aim is to move through the city without pre-determined plan, thus provoking unexpected occurrences and encounters.

This spatial practice rejected the utilitarian logic of the consumer society, aiming instead for the realization of a dynamic city, a city in which the freedom and play would have a central role. Operating collectively, they sought to achieve creative interpretations of the everyday and to promote the practices that will be subversive to the normal state of affairs (Heynen, 1996).

The outburst of citizens' unrest that occurred in May 2015 in Skopje, while first depicted as violent and in frontal confrontation with the government institutions and police, later acquired some of these techniques of creative resistance in space and time. One year after the first protests in Skopje and having civic discontent expressed publicly with various intensity the civic protest against the government eventually has gained a form of drifting demonstrations. The so called "colourful revolution" started as a protest with no specific route, but organized every day, on the spot and with some sort of direct decision making using social media (Figure 7). The urban drifting of the protestors usually is from one institutional building to several others, throwing paint "bombs" at specific institutional buildings and symbols of the Skopje 2014 project. Its mobility enables protestors to escape direct confrontation with the police, which is much better equipped and trained for violent confrontation.





**Figure 7:** “Colorful” revolution of new urban drifters shifting the meta-narratives of buildings and monuments of “Skopje 2014” project

The repetitive spatial occurrence of the protest with uncompromised determination of the participants and with the ritual walking similar to the religious procession that narrates the story of interactions (and confrontations) and struggles among different groups to acquire their newly gained spatial and social relevance (Nejad, 2015) creates a space for encounters and shaping of the city’s future. The spatial and temporal flexibility of the protest in not having a pre-determined route is amended with the colouring of buildings and symbols of the Skopje 2014 project and thus de-contextualizing them and ridiculing the meta-narrative used for this project. It is transgressing the existing and dominant spatial practices and formal emanations of the corrupted elite through a dynamic and creative spatial-temporal action. The superficial and fake historic narrative of the Skopje 2014 project with conservative, unitary and fixed narratives that are banalizing the public space and appearance of the institutional buildings in the centre of the city are disturbed with variety of colours symbolizing the plurality of symbols, appearance and social practices in a multicultural society. It is a sort of a homage to the capacity of *homo ludens* to initiate new interactions and to give new meanings and semantics to the everyday and sometimes banal reality through playful hybridization of a variety of symbols promoting creative and innovative practices in an urban space subverting the reality into a society open for diversity of social and political practices (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Painting the main city square in Skopje as a civic protest

The contemporary urban derive proved to be resistant to any repression from the institutions while providing a suitable and inclusive enough frame for expression of different political visions of the city and the society. It cannot be reduced to just political, social or only spatial action often having the combination of all these features in various combinations

that produce the unique, but still collective and innovative space in the city of Skopje alongside different social and spatial practices, hence enabling unrestricted politicization of the public space and the city without jeopardizing the rights of all citizens to the city.

## CONCLUSIONS

The emerging spatial practices in the cities as a result of the differences and the discontent form the existing models of government among the dominant political and economic elites are depicting processes that have growing importance for better comprehension of the processes that are shaping our societies, but are inherent and specific for the urban context. Hence we can confirm that the cities can be seen as heuristic places where social practices emanated through spatial emergence are re-politicizing the city.

We have argued that the spatial practices in the cities have transformed the political temporal event into a more tangible spatial manifestation of the social and political agenda of citizens. The three main models of democracy which attributes have been used to explore the spatial practices in Skopje are suggesting a strong link between the political agendas and policies of different social groups and elites and their spatial emanation and manifestation in the city. The spatial practices and objects that exhibit the exclusivity of the dominant class where singularity of the building poignant with symbols of dominance and exclusion is exaggerated in the public space downgraded to an urban infrastructure can be associated and framed within the descriptive models of democracy. They are promoting conservative narratives and objects fixed in its social relevance and style which acts as a symbolic representation of the need to preserve and continue the existing models of rule with the dominant class still in place. These spatial practices in the city are showcasing the most important symbol of the dominant model in the inherent hierarchical verticality of the political ideology versus the plurality of the horizontal distribution of the new social and innovative spatial practices in the city.

The participative model of democracy promotes plurality of the narratives through inclusion of the numerous voices and tries to provide legitimacy of the political through inclusive but yet finite models of participation and organization of the political act in the city. This civil activism has its own spatial manifestation in plenums that almost ritually are transgressing the existing social and cultural structure of the city with its walks around the city. The mobility of these spatial practices is representing the decentralized structure of the political organization of plenums trying to preserve their own *raison d'être* in order to enable citizens to oppose the dominant models of governance through their horizontally distributed and inclusive structure and spatial practices. Although the model of the civic plenum provides a strong participatory frame and relatively successful spatial representation of the political agenda that is fluid enough and yet concretely manifested in space the structure of the plenum, remains to be also its biggest challenge. The diffusion of the ideas and the links between the agents of the plenum that must remain in place in order to have a tangible and distinctive organization emerging in time and space of the city is also the main restriction for development of more innovative and effective political practices that will go beyond the visibility of social and political groups in the space of the city.

The showcase of Skopje confirms that the most prominent spatial practices and the framing model that promise to obtain a suitable theoretical and practical background for innovative and creative activism in the city that has regained its political relevance could be the neo-idealistic models of democracy with strong addition of innovative spatial practices as results of creative social practices in the cities. The new urban drifters that

are mobile, flexible and playful enough in their confrontation with the petrified structure of the dominant social and political model are an unsolvable puzzle due to their horizontal organizational and spatial structure for the otherwise rigid and inflexible social structures and power apparatus of the State. In this game, the urban drifters are able to create new spaces of encounters and interactions between diversities in the city, thus making a paradigmatic shift and defeating its opponents in the very essence of their restrictive and oppressive systems.

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# STREETS AS METONYMY: THE CASE OF GEORGES HADDAD AVENUE AND THE ILLUSION OF BOUNDARIES IN BEIRUT

**MURIEL SKAF**

Khatib and Alami Beirut Lebanon. **E:** [muriel.skaf@khatibalami.com](mailto:muriel.skaf@khatibalami.com)

## ABSTRACT

Often studied as the archetypal case of divided cities, Beirut oscillates between a city that still bears the remnants of its division and a city with new socio-economic divisions – both mental and physical. As is typical of many cities in the world, the most prominent representation of these divisions is the street – especially the main urban artery. This paper explores how the evolution of one major artery in Beirut is but a metonymy of the capital's evolution in terms of boundary fluctuation. The evolution of artery also illustrates the city's history of neoliberalism as *modus operandi* of urban planning.

Instead of casting a judgment on whether streets can be disruptors and connectors, the author focuses instead on disregarding the notion of boundaries altogether.

In fact, Georges Haddad Avenue is executed and conceived both as a vital connector and an active disruptor. However, a morphological and socio-economic analysis of what goes on at its edges shows that the boundary is trivial and that the Avenue is but a constant manifestation of neoliberal planning processes, despite the administrative, socio-economic and regulatory boundaries there might be.

The paper will present a critical analysis of the dialectic of Georges Haddad based on three main themes: gentrification, governance, and morphology. The three themes will help understand and validate how streets – like many other urban commodities, represent illusory boundaries, and are constantly at the service of the circulation of capital under a neoliberal regime.

## KEYWORDS

Capitalism, boundaries, Beirut



## INTRODUCTION

In the spring semester of 2009, a dozen third-year architecture students at the American University of Beirut took a design studio course on Georges Haddad Avenue - a major arterial on the eastern edge of Downtown Beirut. The purpose of this studio was to propose an urban intervention on the street that would serve either as a connector or divider of Beirut Central District with its eastern periphery. As is often the case in architecture schools, students proposed ambitious schemes that challenged the socio-economic and political status quo dominating the avenue and its surroundings. The architecture studio on Georges Haddad gave birth to fresh ideas on bridging the gaps of two allegedly very different sides of the avenue.

In parallel, art galleries and studios in Beirut often house exhibitions and installations of local artists who strive to bring together a once divided city that still bears the scars of its war-torn past, waxing poetic on how, through its streets, Beirut can reconcile its differences and bring people together.

While visions and concepts burgeoning in architecture classrooms and artist studios reflect the need for a society to come to terms with itself through its divisive streets, another reading of city streets that goes beyond the reductive binomial divider/connector would allow for a more thorough understanding of how Beirut came to be and how it could circumvent its major obstacles.

Moreover, streets are the ultimate city boundaries, namely in divided cities that still carry on the divides of the past, whether physical or mental. They are seen as both connectors and disruptors. Moving beyond the mental assignment we give to streets as boundaries, we could imagine another narrative of a city street that would benefit to further understand the urban system of Beirut and possibly provide implementation strategies to improve the urban conditions of the city.

In addition, studying city streets in general or a particular street can reveal a great deal on how a city is evolving: who and what is more connected, who or what is being disconnected; who is being let in vs. who is being left out; how architecture and urban morphology behave when faced with a disruptive incident when a street is "created". Therefore, reading Georges Haddad with an alternative lens reveals how the city as body politic and as an evolving organism behaves under a capitalist regime.

In fact, while Georges Haddad was planned and implemented as a vital connector and a boundary of Downtown Beirut, a morphological and socio-economic analysis of what goes on at its edges shows that the boundary is trivial and the Avenue is but a constant manifestation of capitalist planning processes, despite any administrative, regulatory, and socio-economic divides there might be.

With this respect, the present paper will be structured on a tripartite analysis of neoliberal planning processes along Georges Haddad Avenue. The first track will discuss the redlining and gentrification that created the Avenue and that constantly shapes the built environment around it. The second track explores the two concomitant regulatory frameworks, with Georges Haddad allegedly acting as the administrative boundary separating both frameworks: the specific Master Plan in Beirut downtown (Solidere) on one side versus the general planning regulations in Beirut on the other. The third track discusses the similar transformation of urban morphology on both sides of Georges Haddad showing how urban morphology is, once again, at the service of the circulation of capital.

## TRACK 1: GENTRIFICATION AND THE ILLUSION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Prior to the Lebanese Civil War (1975 - 1990) and under President Fouad Chehab (1958 - 1964), the Lebanese Government took on large-scale projects that aimed at improving Beirut's roads and infrastructure networks. Of the major arterials that were planned for Beirut, Georges Haddad originally was a local two-lane quaint road in the dense urban fabric of Saifi (Figure 1). Today, Georges Haddad is a massive piece of infrastructure - a two-way arterial with four lanes on each side, defining the Eastern edge of Downtown Beirut and stretches towards the sea. On a larger scale, Georges Haddad is a vital artery connecting Beirut's sea port to the national highway network leading to the country's only airport, a few miles south of Beirut. This scheme is far from being an accident or an act of benevolent regional planning on behalf of the Government. It was rather the Government's direct response to facilitate the circulation and flow of goods and capital into, across, and out of the city. In fact, "investment in the built environment entails the creation of a whole physical landscape for purposes of production, circulation, exchange, and consumption" (Harvey, 1985, p.6), especially that capital "moves in the formation of long-term elements of the built environment" (Harvey, 1985, p.7).



**Figure 1:** Downtown Beirut before the Lebanese Civil War. Georges Haddad is barely discernable in the old urban fabric of the city. Source: Le Centre-Ville de mon Pere by Tania Ingea. Author Highlights.

Although the widening of Georges Haddad and the restructuring of its surrounding was for infrastructural and traffic improvements *prima facie*, perhaps the hidden agenda - or rather, added value - would've been the raising of a red light district that Georges Haddad was a part of. This classic urban renewal scheme was already in fashion in Beirut (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003) to rid Beirut of its slum dwellers and other "undesirables" residents. Such schemes had already been a *modus operandi* in major cities around the world witnessing a massive influx of capital that needed to be invested: Haussmanian Paris (Harvey, 2003) and Downtown Los Angeles during the 1930s (Davis, 1990) to name a few. Prior to the Lebanese Civil War and during its so-called "Golden Age", Beirut was no exception.

Despite the many achievements in urban renewal of the Lebanese Government prior to the Lebanese Civil War (1975 - 1990), Georges Haddad widening only occurred after the war and at the height of the urban reconstruction of Downtown Beirut.

In fact, the Lebanese Civil War was a genuine urbicide for Beirut (Fregonese, 2009), where the links of political violence and the systematic destruction of urban space are inevitable. The aftermath of the war made Downtown Beirut a prime site for redevelopment, where most of the land was devalued capital waiting to be invested in all over again. The forgotten urban renewal projects were therefore resurrected and expanded - Georges Haddad Avenue made the light of day. Capitalism preys on urbicide and devalued capital: "the devaluation of capital in the built environment does not necessarily destroy the use value - the physical resource - constituted by the built environment. This physical resource can now be used as 'devalued capital', and as such as it functions as a free good that can help to re-establish the basis for renewed accumulation" (Harvey, 1985, p.7)

Not only did Georges Haddad Avenue get the widening it was expecting, the red-light district de facto eradicated; instead, the 'facelift' of the avenue became an integral part of a gentrification process that was bound to happen, with or without the Civil War. In fact, with or without the war, Marx would argue that "in order (...) to maintain its own dynamic, capitalism is forced to disrupt and destroy what it initially created as part of its own strategy for self-preservation. Communities have to be disrupted by speculative activity, growth must occur, and whole residential neighborhoods must be transformed to meet the needs of capital accumulation" (Harvey, 1985, p. 123). The vision of post-bellum Beirut - and mostly Downtown Beirut - needed to be that of a safe haven not only for local investors, but also - and mainly - for Gulf investors where global capital could easily circulate and get invested. In result, and at the onset of the 1990s, the urbanization of Downtown Beirut produced an attractive and luxurious built environment where even the necessities of the built environment became commodities for investment. "This tendency to transform necessities into luxuries determines the whole social pattern of backward nations (...) which are associated with a world market based on capitalist production" (Marx, 1863).

It is therefore no wonder that Georges Haddad now boasts on both its sides some of the most expensive commercial, retail, and residential real estate in a city where exorbitant property values have become the new normal. Though both sides of Georges Haddad Avenue look inconspicuously similar today, this was not always the case during post-war reconstruction. In fact, the Western side of the avenue belonging to Downtown Beirut was re-built and got gentrified much faster than the Eastern side (Gemmayzeh neighborhood). When the new face of Downtown Beirut was showcased in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Georges Haddad was a clear demarcation of two neighborhoods: Downtown Beirut to the West versus Gemmayzeh to the East. The first got a sudden facelift while the latter still bore remnants of the war. Soon enough, business and political elite in Lebanon as well as the Gulf countries bought property in Downtown Beirut, making it an exclusive gated community for the rich, especially in the main residential community of Downtown Beirut: Saifi Village; Gemmayzeh, however, remained faithful to its locals, with not much of an increase in property value and a preservation of most of its residents. The dialectic of Downtown Beirut vs. Gemmayzeh played out long enough as Georges Haddad Avenue was a clear boundary of both communities. Gradually, however, such differences began to dissipate as Gemmayzeh underwent an inevitable gentrification.

As capital accumulation was reached after the build-out of Saifi Village, capital needed to change locations, "cross barriers", and re-invest itself in a less-valued area: no other than Gemmayzeh.

The reconstruction of Downtown Beirut helped then produce new modes of consumption and new social wants and needs that got aggregated in different communities. In doing so, “the urbanization process concomitantly [produced] new distributive groupings or consumption classes, which may crystallize into distinctive communities within the overall urban structure” (Harvey, 1985, p. 81).

Though Gemmayzeh and Saifi Village still represent different cultural and social cachets, their behaviour under capitalism and gentrification is strikingly similar.

Georges Haddad Avenue plays the ambivalent role in either controlling or facilitating the circulation of capital, depending on the level of accumulation, rendering the notion of “boundaries” between two different communities trivial.

To put it in David Harvey’s words, in order to “overcome spatial barriers and to annihilate space with time, spatial structures are created that themselves act as barriers to further accumulation. These spatial structures are expressed in the form of immobile transport and ancillary facilities implanted in the landscape” (Harvey, 1985, p. 25).

Though Marx and Harvey argue that the systematic destruction of the built environment only makes way for more capital accumulation and acts out in capitalists’ favors, it is unclear whether Beirut’s destruction was deliberate. However, it certainly acted as catalyst for the cycles of production and consumption of capital to the benefit of the city’s post-war developers-contractors as well as the business and political elite.

## **TRACK 2: URBAN PLANNING AND THE ILLUSION OF REGULATIONS**

As seen above, the first track of this paper debunked the myth of Georges Haddad as a boundary between two communities by explaining how capitalism creates boundaries to define where capital needs to accumulate, only to break these same boundaries to facilitate the free movement of capital from one neighborhood to another. Realizing that gentrification is only the realization of class-monopoly rent (Harvey, 1974) it is unsurprising that both sides of Georges Haddad behave similarly under gentrification albeit at different paces.

The differences between Saifi (or Downtown Beirut in general) and Gemmayzeh can also be assigned to a difference in urban regulations and planning regimes. On the surface, it appears that Georges Haddad Avenue is one of the administrative boundaries of Downtown Beirut.

In fact, the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut was under the effigy of a private real estate company – Solidere. Created as a société foncière (real estate company) following the Lebanese Civil War, Solidere was in charge of the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut under a special Built-Operate-Transfer contract. Irrespective of the many criticisms Solidere has faced and is still facing today as a private company taking over public domain and stripping old Beiruti residents of their property, Downtown Beirut is now under the authority of a daunting planning regime with strict urban planning regulations (Figure 2).





**Figure 2:**  
Downtown  
Beirut Master  
Plan. Source:  
Solidere. Author  
Highlights.

Outside of the Solidere boundary, and on the other side of Georges Haddad Avenue, the built environment operates under the general planning laws and zoning codes of Beirut municipal area.

The creation of Solidere and how it transformed the built environment and more importantly how it transformed the relationship of the Beiruti society with their city centre reinforced the idea of a boundary between Solidere and non-Solidere, emphasized by Downtown Beirut's bordering arterials, namely Georges Haddad Avenue.

However, despite the seemingly different planning regimes occurring on both sides of Georges Haddad Avenue beyond, both planning processes pertaining to Solidere and pertaining to the general building regulations of Beirut present structural similarities that render Georges Haddad Avenue an illusion of a boundary. These structural similarities are two-fold: first, both planning regimes are identical in their set-up and authorship; second, they behave identically in allowing exceptions to their rules in favor of high-end development projects.

In fact, between the two world wars and up till the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War, the general building law of Lebanon as well as the Master Plan and zoning regulations of Beirut were authored by the Lebanese liberal cultivated elite aided by appointed international experts. The bourgeois families of Eddé, Salam, and Tabet, to name a few, gave rise to a clique of architects and planners – all educated in renowned colleges and universities in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America – who structured the practices of architecture and urban planning in Lebanon (Ghandour, 2002). In parallel, the Government hired Michel Ecochard (in 1936 and in 1952) to propose a Master Plan and zoning regulations for the city of Beirut, still in place today. The complicity between Lebanon's bourgeois families, business elites, political leaders, and the architectural and planning milieus was no different after the Civil War ended in Lebanon. In fact, Solidere was the concoction of the real estate mogul-cum-Prime



Minister Rafic Hariri, long considered the mastermind of Beirut's renewal. Building on sizeable wealth and strong ties to Gulf power families, Hariri easily gained influence and popularity as the only savior of a totally destroyed Beirut. Teaming up with some of the Lebanese architecture and business elite at the time, and with the help of leading international experts in urban design, Hariri was able to transform a once-populist downtown Beirut into a crystallized version of an international business district where capital can roam around safely and freely. Even following Hariri's death in 2005, Solidere constantly operates under the same mechanism, where it appoints leading Lebanese and international star-architects as well as international urban designers to constantly reinforce the image of the built environment it originally sought – a prime place of consumption by and for the rich.

It remains important to note that political corruption played a major part in shaping Downtown Beirut and the creation of Solidere, which became the main speculator-developer orchestrating the urbanization process of Downtown Beirut. According to Marx and building on Harvey, the fusion of business and political elite is by no means accidental; it is rather necessary. "Political corruption (...) plays a role which, in a market economy, can be viewed positively, since it frequently loosens up the supply of land from the excessive rigidities of land-use regulation by bureaucratic fiat. Without a certain minimum of governmental regulation and institutional support, however, the speculator-developer could not perform the vital function of promoter, coordinator and stabilizer of land-use change" (Harvey, 1985, p.68)

On another level, both planning regimes operate similarly in catering for exceptions as new rules to their processes. In fact, Solidere is in of itself an exception to regulations that allow for the establishment of real estate companies in Lebanon. An exception to those regulations was passed specifically to allow for the establishment of Solidere and a new category of real estate companies was created – Société Foncière de Reconstruction (real estate company for reconstruction). According to Lebanese law, a real estate company is allowed to take over private properties within a designated area for redevelopment purposes with the condition of allowing previous property owners of this area to become shareholders of this company and be allowed to return to their properties. However, the Solidere law allowed for the company's shares to be sold on the market at aberrantly low prices to allow for the funding of the mega-project for the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut. With massive speculation and the rise of land value, none of the old Beirut residents were able to regain their property rights in Downtown Beirut. Once again, and through the creation of legal exceptions to national laws, the financial and state institutions were able to "play important roles in checking and enhancing flows of capital into specific sectors or areas" (Harvey, 1985, p.7)

On the other side of Georges Haddad, exceptions act as rules when it comes to planning laws and building regulations. Outside the realm of Solidere, gentrification is facilitated through an up-zoning and a density increase of low-rise neighborhoods. During the 1990s and early 2000s, numerous laws were added to the building regulations allowing for the increase of building heights and exploitation factors – those measures were lobbied by influential developers that saw an opportunity to increase their returns on investment in large-scale projects. Such punctual additions to the urban and building regulations were only able to happen due to the mutually beneficial relationship between the developers and members of the ruling class.

Such exceptions to the planning and building regulations, coupled with the corruption among developers and politicians alike, and a capitalist economy that constantly shapes



realm – is constantly shaped and defined by the regulations and master plans around it (regulatory framework), the mental representations that its users assign it (representational space), and the maps and graphics that help illustrate it (representation of space).

The fact that Georges Haddad behaves both as a boundary – from a representational perspective – and as a continuum – from a regulatory perspective – helps reinforce the notion that capitalism subjugates both community representations and regulatory policies to its favor.

### TRACK 3: URBAN MORPHOLOGY AND THE ILLUSION OF IDENTITY

Building on the behavioral similarities under capitalism of both sides of Georges Haddad Avenue, the third track of this paper explores the similar transformations that occurred during the renovation of the urban fabric and buildings along the Avenue.

The widening of Georges Haddad from local road to arterial caused an inevitable disruption in the urban fabric. Most of the plots that are now on the edge of the Avenue in fact shared a boundary with other plots and buildings that no longer exist. The rupture in what was a continuous urban fabric created a new reality for these plots and buildings. Prior to the widening, their main façades were oriented towards the streets perpendicular to Georges Haddad. Now, the main façade is de facto the one facing the Avenue (Figure 4). Most architects and developers that took on the adaptive reuse and renovation of the affected buildings along Georges Haddad responded in shifting the buildings' façade hierarchy: main building facades now face the Avenue (Menem, 2010; Figure 5). The change in architectural language was then caused by a change in the hierarchy of the road network through the creation of Georges Haddad Avenue. This transformation, however, was more than a mere reaction to infrastructural changes in the city. It was a rather deliberate maneuver on behalf of Solidere – along with its clique of developers and architects – to showcase a pristine renovation along Downtown Beirut's main arteries through façade renovation of old Beiruti buildings.



**Figure 4:** Landmark Beiruti House on Lot 581 prior to renovation. The building's secondary façade now faces the main avenue. Source: Fouad Menem Architects.





**Figure 5:** Lot 581 after renovation (building in the middle of the picture) now houses a French café-bistro with 4 residential units in the upper floors. In contrast with the former picture, the main façade is now facing Georges Haddad Avenue. Source: the Author

Such a take on renovation – focusing on building facades and exteriors while disregarding the architectural morphology and building layout – is not specific to Beirut's reconstruction; it is also far from being accepted as a *fait accompli*. Proponents of this approach, under the guise of postmodernism, saw an architecture and urban morphology flexible enough to adorn a traditional look (in façade) while adapting to modern societal needs (in plan). Many architecture professors and critics went against what was called a reductionist approach to adaptive reuse and renovation. According to these critics, renovation should have been faithful to the architectural heritage of these buildings in both appearance and functionality, façade and plan (Arbid, 2009). Though the debate remains valid in architecture circles, it is important to shift the focus beyond morphological discourses and architectural theories and rather study how this particular approach to adaptive reuse falls under a capitalist agenda of the built environment.

As is elsewhere in Beirut, Georges Haddad boasts a rich heritage of traditional buildings and urban fabric. Streamlined by Solidere's reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, the approach to renovation along Georges Haddad and throughout the city mainly focused on using heritage as the city's main selling point. The deliberate transformation of heritage into a commodity for consumption fits well into Beirut's vision of a safe haven for investments in the city's built environment (Ragab, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

According to Marx, the built environment is split in two categories: built environment for production - a fixed capital that functions as a physical framework for production; and a built environment for consumption - houses, sidewalks, shops, etc. Interestingly enough, city streets are among the items in the built environment that function jointly for consumption and production (Marx, 1863). It is therefore through the study of a city's streets that we can perhaps begin to grasp the impact of capital circulation and

investment on urban transformation, especially that capitalism tends to create a physical landscape of roads, houses, factories, schools, shops and so forth, in its own image (Harvey, 1985).

The paper showed how the study of a particular street in Beirut, through the analysis of the regulatory frameworks, the urban morphology, and the economic transitions, can summarize the history of a city constantly under the pressure of capitalism and neoliberal policies. Reiterating the point that both Marx and Harvey iterated, capitalism reinforces communities through the creation and dissolution of boundaries whenever market forces and capital accumulation see fit. Boundaries and the neighborhoods, though physically and mentally differentiable, are no more than constructs that act in favor of capital accumulation.

City streets are therefore neither connector nor dividers: they are either tools to create boundaries to reinforce communitarianism or connectors to transport goods – all in the service of an easier circulation of capital in an urban setting.

This present paper could go further in either of those two directions. It could take on additional archetypal streets of the capital or other case studies in similarly divided cities in the world. It could also undertake a deeper analysis of Georges Haddad by exposing the monetary investments, changes in property values, and variation in demographic composition on both sides of Georges Haddad. A deep dive analysis of Georges Haddad Avenue could help propose alternative planning mechanisms or action plans that might subvert the hegemony of capitalism on the built environment.

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A decorative graphic on the right side of the page. It consists of three grey L-shaped bars stacked vertically, each with a rounded top-right corner. To the right of these bars is a solid red bar, also with a rounded top-right corner. The text "TRACK 11" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the red bar.

**TRACK 11**

# **T11** DIALECTICAL RELATIONS IN THE STREET: CULTURAL, SPATIAL, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL

Track chair | **Dr. CEREN SEZER**  
TU Delft  
Co-chair | **Dr. Christine Mady**  
FAAD, NDU

## **DESCRIPTION**

Streets play an essential role in constituting public life in cities based on several aspects: On the one hand, streets accommodate the everyday life in the city: we rely on the street for our daily activities (e.g. travelling, social and business meetings) that offer an important framework for encounters between people from different social and cultural backgrounds. These encounters stimulate various levels of contacts between urban groups (e.g. seeing and being seen, conversations) that might either support social cohesion between communities or act as a source of conflict and contestation in the city. On the other hand, the street is not a passive background of these social relations; it rather plays an essential role in their production: the divergent characteristics of the streets in their publics, configurations and design shape the nature of social contacts in the city (e.g. seeing and being seen, long conversations). This can mark out certain areas as dead public spaces or set aside for certain functions, which welcome or problematize behavior and use patterns. This track tackles the role of the street in order to shape the public life in the city respectively from the given aspects through empirically rich and theoretically informed case studies in various disciplines.

## **KEYWORDS**

Politics of space, spatial relations, socio-spatial production, cultural patterns.



## THE SOUTHERN SPACE

**SILVIA GRON and GIULIA LA DELFA**

Politecnico di Torino Italy **E:** [silvia.gron@polito.it](mailto:silvia.gron@polito.it), [giulia.ladelfa@hotmail.it](mailto:giulia.ladelfa@hotmail.it)

### ABSTRACT

The climate, the cultural background and the anthropological tendencies make the Mediterranean street a place to stay: not only a place where people spend their time, but also where they carry out their activities. Behind the little windows facing the streets in the Mediterranean city centers there are living rooms and kitchens, but beyond these, through the washing lines and some flowers on the balconies, the inhabitants tell something about them and their ordinary life. The direct survey conducted in these spaces, helps defining an identity of Mediterranean street, with multiple meanings (which are well-told in some pictures and movies), by observing with a systematic care and noting what we are watching, including the things which are apparently without interest.

Beyond their house wall, in the Panier, in Marseille, day after day, the residents conquer small parts of the street (they can do this also because the streets of this neighborhood are above all pedestrians). We find the interesting relationship between public and private spaces especially where the interstitial space becomes something similar to a living room, where the big washing lines between two buildings overshadow the street. It is through the observation of the street, the study of its image and a cross-cutting research with different sources that we can collect fundamental moments which can tell us not only what residential architecture does not succeed in fulfilling, but also what we are not willing to give up to.

### KEYWORDS

Cultural Heritage, Mediterranean basin, Living space

## INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean town offers a list of mutual influences between autochthonous and no autochthonous cultures. These influences always show themselves in the public space. The experiences of Arabian populations in some Sicily towns, like in the south of Spain, are a great example. There are little narrow and winding roads, majolica colored paved, inner patios/open courtyards and courts where the light is caught or pushed back, according to the moments of the day. All the houses, isolated or aggregate, consist on a recurrence of elements: the court, the patio, the planning on more levels, and the clean separation among the spaces. The connection with the public space is added to those elements. The public space is composed of an alternation of opaque and transparent surfaces that connect the inside and the outside. The features of this connection set up at the same time the houses and the facing space, constantly by redefining the relation between them: the boundary between the road and the house.

When you walk along via della Sanità at Naples (it is a few dozen meters away from the cemetery of Fontanelle, an extraordinary demonstration of uniqueness), you could deeply breathe in the perfume of fried food. All the houses are closed, it is Sunday afternoon and families are late to lunch; it is fried food time. Maybe a stronger breath than the others could be enough, but certainly, a front door will open on the road, offering some tastes. After all, it is the door, which divides the dining room from the most comfortable living room: the road.

Sometimes, by entering in Sant Andreu de Palomar district, several kilometers away from the Barcelona centre, it happens to feel the strong presence of the sea. All houses are placed side-by-side, very narrow, in a series, simulating a shyness that hides the deepness of hermetically sealed blocks. At two o'clock of a Saturday spring afternoon, you could find out some dining rooms from the other side of the street and some chair and garden seats could begin to place themselves along the facades, on the pavement. Carrer de Saint Narcis could become the long house corridor, where everybody, going along, tries to move freely.

Walking along Fener district, Istanbul, not far from the city of big mosques, you could come across some details that tell us about the nights of the cats on the roofs, warm up by a just ended sunny day. The same cats, guardians of an ancient heritage, which during the afternoon share the road with playing children, guard it from the top during the night.

It could happen to spend an afternoon along the Bari Vecchia streets, waiting a boat that sails to the Balkans and curious, to stop to watch an old woman weaving the most beautiful crochet ever seen before. You could stop to speak and to listen to the countless stories of the block, while children are grimacing. After all, that road is also their bedroom.

Our historic backgrounds swarm with solutions, where every particular situation becomes the opportunity to define private life fields outdoors: multi-storey porticos, pavements, terraces, little stone staircase, gardens on the roofs. If we suppose that, in Central and Northern Europe, populations live in houses, consequently we can deduce that in the Mediterranean area we live in the squares. Moreover, living is also sitting on the front door, staying under the arcade along the street, overlooking the balcony, going up the stairs that climb up from the outside. Then the transparency of living space is realized. This unlimited variety of outdoors places does not mean to minimize the house to a mere scenic matter or a passive model of the city. It reveals a complex version of domestic theme, whose nature could be searched in the particular integration of inside and outside.

The Panier is an extraordinary case-study to deal with these relations.



## PANIER MARSEILLE: THE MORPHOLOGY OF LIVING

The old city of Marseille, or rather, what it remains after the big urban transformations from the XIX century up until today, that is from the first plans of demolition and rebuilding by Haussmann for urban renewal, now shows itself for its little dimensions (9,5 hectares), like a little district composed of about fifty blocks of different shapes and size. Included administratively in the 2<sup>e</sup> arrondissement, we identify it with its own name 'Panier', to highlight its singularity and its homogeneity, but also its historical value, which is preserved by the Plan of architectural and environmental protection. We apply the preservation according to the cataloguing, the planning rules and directions, includes in the plan of Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural Urbain et Paysager (ZPPAUP, 1997); we add programs of public intervention for the realization of social housing, but also of tax break to private people who decide to keep their buildings. The Panier is isolated from the rest of the city, not only for the changes of altitude of the excavations (15m), made with the interventions during the time, but also for the recent change that involves the entire city (for 480 hectares), thanks to the project Euroméditerranée (1995-2030). This project, on the one hand, designs the entire waterfront, by carrying out new districts and services and by giving the city a new image; on the other hand, it excludes any integration with the older structure of the city. We are interested in the Panier because it is an example of a wide stratification of building that has settled centuries of history. It has also adapted and rebuilt itself since its foundation, following an historical background able to conform itself to the needs of a minimal living, and to welcome migrant populations (the Italians, the Spaniards, the Corsicans, the Maghreb people). Moreover, the Panier, today, is still a place where you can feel the medley and the temporality. The building stratification evidences the cultural and social stratification, through the spaces shape and its use during the time.

### The historical background

In order to find out how this structure has consolidated, we need to start from the reading of historical papers that let us design the structure of the city before its big extension works and changes. The cadastral map of 1820 shows the medieval city composed of six big densely populated districts, and of a very compact structure, with the old regular plan of Greek framework, adapted to the hills (buttes) morphology and that has changed, densifying the living space. The archaeological excavations made recently by the City, after some demolitions, attests what has been recognized perceptively. They show a slight modification of building orientation and that it remains a regular old structure, still similar to the present one (Drocourt, 2005). The roads network is bounded by continuous fronts and marked by the sequence of houses, approximately of the same dimensions (lots: 5 x 7/10m; height: 3/4 floors out of the ground). The only change is how lots approach themselves côté à côté (side by side) or dos à dos (back to back), showing an urban system of social equality; it is easy to think that life among the different districts is not very different and we perceive a continuous city inside its own structure. Courts among the houses do not exist, the only open air spaces are the roads and some squares (which are sometimes composed of a wider road than the others are) and the convent courts that, with Napoleonic edicts, will be partly demolished to welcome new houses. The big interventions for the realization of rue de la République (1862-64) definitely breaks the original urban structure of the city (East and North zone). However, the demolitions by Nazis (in 1943 for South zone towards the Vieux Port) will definitely separate the Panier from the rest of the extending city. Even if the Malraux law (1962) makes precise arrangements about the preservation of historical centers, the remaining part of the Panier has not survived whole up to the present day. In fact, the Vivien law (1970), in

order to make plans of urban change (particularly for the banlieux) and to limit social decay, prescribes the demolition of unhealthy houses and, consequently, some blocks of the Panier are expropriated and totally demolished from 1975 to 2000 (marked by the numbers 24; 39; 61; 62; 7; 55; 9). Other blocks are involved in interventions of social-housing renovation. Moreover, in order to improve the health-sanitary conditions, the houses are often entirely transformed indoors by the unification of lots, the centralization of stairs and the opening of new skylight shafts (cavedia). In these cases, the preservation plan (ZPPAUP, 1997) lingers over these parameters of urban image, asking the property of an individual organ in the building restoration for consolidating the volumes and the facades structure, excluding any instruction about practical aspects of private space. The normative separation between public and private space and indoors and outdoors makes coexist two systems that have no balance. The first one is the orderly vision from the colored facades, true urban wings of a space for shopping of souvenirs and for tourists in general. The second one is the way dwellers live their houses and their districts, with the need of taking possession of public space and having primary services, often remitted to other zones of the city. The co-presence of tourists and residents does not always give benefits. As it often happens also in other realities, the excessive anthropic load does not allow an easy communal life, because of small available space. In the Panier, it happens only in the summer, the resident uses most the outdoors space of his house, whereas the tourists' absence in the winter brings a desertification of commercial activities, only seasonally opened: it makes difficult the regular daily course.

Therefore, since the Panier it is not a real district found with its own structure that uniformly designs the internal layout of activities and services, we could easily understand how the Panier lacks of its own urban structure and this structure, partly crumbled by widespread demolitions, shows all its weaknesses.

### **Existing researches and comparison with other realities**

The researches made about the Panier concern, firstly, the historical structure that point out the stratifications and the peculiarities of the old structure (Bertrand, 2012); secondly, the social importance of the analysis of dynamics of migratory processes (elements of communal life among different cultures) that designs the decay and examines the unacceptable conditions like violence, poverty, exploitation (Attard-Maraninchi, 1990; 1997); and, finally, the town planning strategies (Brisse, 1980). Besides the social aspect, we add researches about urban politics, especially in this period of strong transformation of the city, in order to verify the compatibility and the effectiveness of some interventions of preservation and building (Hernandez, 2013). In particular, it is very interesting the comparison with other similar realities for the physical and social decay, like Naples, to point out the relations between preservation programs and new strategies of intervention that focus on the urban image and the touristic fruition as economic source of development. This therapeutic modality aims to construct a positive representation of the place that shifts elsewhere the actual problems and difficulties of dwellers (Bertoncello, 2001; Burle 2001).

### **From the house to the road: the distributive layout**

Studying closely the urban structure, we point out that it is composed of an orthogonal network system that adapts itself to the hill shape – Buttes des Moulins. Moreover, streets have regular layouts. Those at the top (they follow one another with terracing that start from 11,5m asl, just to arrive to Place des Moulins at 40,50m asl) often, for their length related to the width of the road (about m 4,5) do not make glimpse the end

of the route, neither landscape views or perspectives, like the view of the sea, which could orient or favor some areas than others (Fig. 1). The linking cross streets that cut the ridge adapt themselves to the morphology of the ground with so high slopes that the introduction in the steepest points of stairs is necessary, particularly in the settlement points of entrance into the Panier, where the link with altitude level of new districts results raised (the South rue Caisserie 11,50m asl - Montée des Accoules 31,60m asl; the East place Sadi-Carnot 12,40m asl - rue de Belles Ecuelles 27,30m asl; the West rue Miradou 13,80m asl - rue de l'Évêché 18,30m asl).



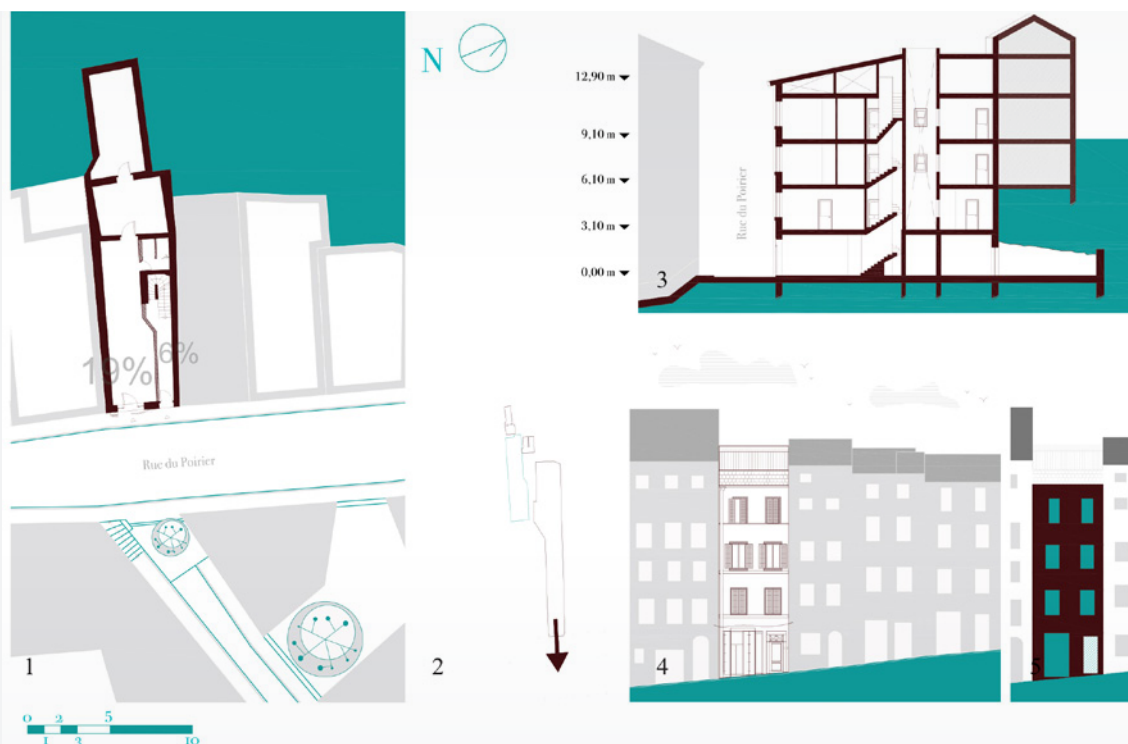
**Figure 1:** Some photos of Mediterranean streets in the Panier district (Gron – La Delfa)

The buildings that bound the roads with a continuous outline are marked by the series of lots that approach themselves according to the model *côté à côté*. It shapes aligned blocks, so it overlooks two parallel roads. However, the model *dos à dos* is characterized by the approach of two ranks that shape quadrangular blocks. For both of them, the approach of houses does not design pertinence courts and the ground occupies 100% of surface. All the houses composed of four floors out of the ground (in some cases with a rear top-floor flat and a terrace) with a double pitch covering and a brickwork surface, are very simple. The facade is marked by a double series of windows (there are not balconies) and few decorations (horizontal cornices or border on doors and windows). It distinguishes itself for the coloring of walled parameter, but also for the wooden parts, doors and windows, outside roll-up shutters, and, most of all, the windows and signs of shops that give back the image of Panier as Mediterranean village (Brisse, 1982).

The small size houses (the covered one about 35 square meters) are used by floor; in fact, from the entrance door we enter the flat through a common winding or aligned staircase along the wall to reduce the occupied surface. Each flat is bounded by a bearing wall on the boundaries; the inside space is open and the division, if it exists, distinguishes only the living area from the bedroom, using furniture and thin walls; the fact of living is promiscuous and functions mixed up, without identifying for each one an established space.

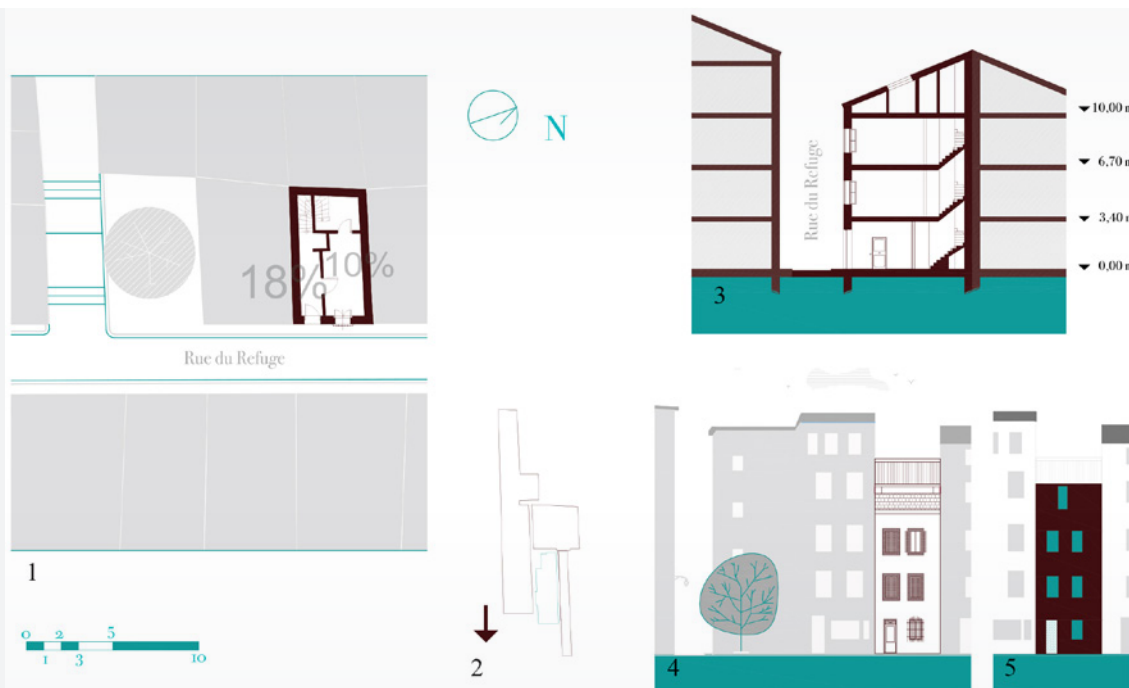
### **Over the walls, inside the houses: the private dimension**

At number. 17, rue du Poirier (Fig. 2), a four-storey building out of the ground with a top-floor flat, (cadastral reference 809 A607), shows itself to the street with a beige facade (17m in height) and rectangular windows with French window shutters.



**Figure 2:** Case study 17, rue du Poirier – Marseille. 1. The first floor plan with the window-to-floor area ratio (expressed as a percentage). 2. The diagram of the deformation of the domestic space depending on the use (it is an assessment of the spaces inside the building, of the hierarchy existing between the rooms of every apartment, according to the different uses of the living space). 3. One section of the building. 4. The front of the building. 5. Quantitative analysis of the total area of windows, through the observation of the elevations.

The house has two different entrances from the street: the first one is merely for the residents and leads to the right, whereas the second one leads to the left and is the entrance to the café-restaurant that, like many shops of the Panier, has a length in deepness, often with a single overlooking to the outside. The functional scheme of the shops has a logical hierarchy: the storehouse at the end, a basement dug in the ground, communicating with an area of food preparation and, finally, the restaurant hall, the only place to visit and open to customers, with natural lighting and airing. Moving a little bit to the right, making his way through the tables of the dehors, you get over the little wooden door and enter a corridor with a brick floor. You enter the stairwell that distributes the flows to all the floors of the building, to enter the different flats: there are four where a family, a couple, two students live and a one-roomed flat is vacant. The boundary between the street and the communal stairs is sharp, the little door is of black wood and it is never open. The flats have a single overlooking on the street, towards south; in fact, residents often overlook the windows, speak with passers-by or with the people stop at the dehors of the bar at the bottom.



**Figure 3:** Case study 15, rue du Refuge – Marseille. 1. The first floor plan with the window-to-floor area ratio (expressed as a percentage). 2. The diagram of the deformation of the domestic space depending on the use (it is an assessment of the spaces inside the building, of the hierarchy existing between the rooms of every apartment, according to the different uses of the living space). 3. One section of the building. 4. The front of the building. 5. Quantitative analysis of the total area of windows, through the observation of the elevations.

In number 15, rue du Refuge (Fig. 3), a four-storey building out of the ground, with a facade of 5m in width and a bit more 12m in height, a double line of windows that watches the narrow street: a door-window on the top floor (the enter to the terrace) and five windows, whose one of them, on the right of the entrance door, has fixed close iron bars. There lives a family, composed of three people and their routine take places among the different levels of the building. The functional internal scheme is based on a gradient from rooms less private, like the kitchen on the first floor out of the ground and the living room, to served areas with more privacy: a double bedroom on the third floor and a single bedroom on the top floor out of the ground. At about five p.m., a group of children is playing ball between the little doors of the street, before grandmothers' eyes, overlooking the windows.

### From the road to the house: a continuous living

Building, telling and sharing stories among different people could perform an important duty: it could contribute to create a new discussion plan about the value of public space in a Mediterranean district. The Panier streets are tangled up and they climb the level curves of the hill of Mills. They are the same streets that during the winter and the summer become the living room of who lives in the district. The meridian space of Panier is a passing place, for people who choose to cross the passage de Lorette to reach from the north the Charité or the Vieux Port; like an occupied bridge, like communal stairs, where those who live in that house leaves something about him, over the door. Over the doorstep, you have no right to pass. However, people are inclined to share some little things. In rue du Refuge, passing in different moments of the day, it is possible to be present at some scenes that tell about the life in the public space: you get over the slopes, you go along the pavements in the shadow of buildings to go to school or to



work, to deliver the mail or to reach place de Lenche for a cup of coffee. You walk for a breath of air, to reach the Vieux Port; we distinguish scenes of necessary and optional activities (Jan Gehl, 1987). In some stretches of rue du Refuge, you can see curtains hang out outside the houses, on doors and windows to shade, to protect yourself from the passers-by's gazes, from the insects; textile curtains, bamboo sticks or plastic curtains, to cover from the rain the washing hang out. The location of commercial activities on the ground floor of a residential building, interchanged with buildings with direct overlooking to the street, creates a relationship between residents, merchants and tourists that shows itself in the public space. The street becomes a place of exchange. In some streets of the Panier, particularly if they are not suitable for vehicles, so exclusively reachable on foot, we materially identify the expansion of life over the walls of the house towards the external space. In some cases, the peripheral space of a shop (that more far from the window on the street) becomes a bit a house. Therefore, between the blind bathroom at the end and the storehouse a little kitchen and a television get in. Moving on towards the outside, getting over a door, an alcove or a curtain you find yourself in the shop of ceramics or in a soap factory.

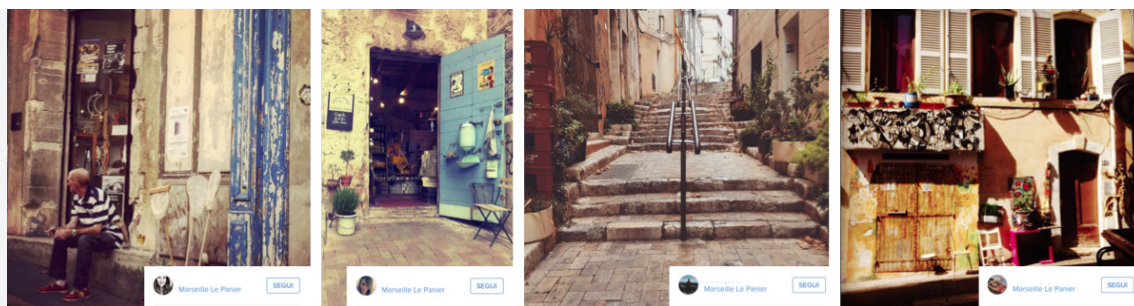
## THE RESEARCH

There is a wide bibliography, which deal with the protection of the heritage, provides material and detailed and quantifiable surveys about the public space and how it has changed during the (Maogouliotis, 2016; UNESCO - 2004; Kükükerman, 1991), but it does not give any indications about its relation with the built-up. The graphic revision of the historical cartography has let us study changes, distinguishing what is new and empty from what is full. The experience of travel unites to tools listed up to now that focus on the representation of the existing, the urban and territorial condition, the comparison between thesis and experiences that has tried to answer to the questions about the search of innovation in the expressive means for the study of the city. The inspection has allowed catching some architectural, technological elements, etc. but also the atmosphere that envelop the district. We have constructed a narration through a slow travel (Cassano, 1996). A return of the atmosphere that J. Hasse describe as a skin of the city, in this case of the Panier (Hasse, 2012).

The unconscious and instinctive act of trying to feel the atmosphere of a specific place, let us reach similar spaces and analogies. In particular, in some cities the atmosphere that we perceive is subject to fast changes. Real changes that occur according to the moment of the day, to the season or to the day of the month. They are changes that we perceive, that we can hardly describe analytically, but that settle in more or less temporary manifestations about the architecture of the space. I love my city, but I would not be able to say precisely what I love about her (Perec, 1974).

The direct observation has allowed, in the second place, to understand the entrances of the Panier: the flows that on the paper are simply summarisable through broken segments, are, in the reality, a narrow slope, an open air and stone made stair or covered passages. The passage de Lorette, (on the boundary northeast of the district) is marked by some signs along rue de la République. When you get over a passage is one of the building by Haussmann, you find yourself in a little commercial tunnel, which, after 18 m, stops at the crossing with the passage des Folies Bergères. Not a passage, but a little enclosure marked by the two blocks of the building by Haussmann. The boundaries are buildings of 6-7 floors that shade the public space. When you get over the few meters of width of the passage de Lorette that continue over the court, on the left and on the

right, shops bank up discarded material and little tables and clotheshorses pile up. Over the second block of buildings, we find the Panier. In this case, the boundary dimension corresponds to the deepness of the double block by Haussmann. Another catalogue of information deals with the theme with an extremely horizontal approach, with the reading of economic, social, demographical data, etc. It also uses unconventional sources (I refer to social media, in particular to zero hour communication and the one click trend – as the real-time sharing of data on the social network and the research and online purchase in a click –), as the collective Space Caviar (2014). The use of filmography is another tool. For example, in 1954, Vittorio De Sica, with the feature movie *L'oro di Napoli*, gave a very current narration. In a street of neapolitan Bassi a merchant offers fried pizzas to the passers-by and to a woman who lives a few floors above his commercial space. In 2002, Crialese in the movie *Respiro*, tells about closed streets that lead to the port, about the relation between the sun and the facades of the houses, the surfaces of the courts in the shadow with the colored curtains hang out on the street, about the link of closeness between a little village in Lampedusa Island and the sea. Besides the filmography, a research in the world of social media is useful. It allows to consult an amount of data (not analytic), but locatable in time and space. Today, in a February afternoon, if you sit in a café of place de Lenche, in the Panier, you can see a picture or a video of the same place of the previous summer, with your own smartphone (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4:** Panier. Some photos from instagram. Hashtag research: #panier #ruedupanier #paniermarseille

This method, merely synchronous, does not investigate the relation between architectural manufactures and the facing space, neither the relation with documents, but it allows looking closely at an extremely far space-temporal dimension; humanity now produces the same amount of data produced from the dawn of civilization up to 2003 every two days (BIGCCS, 2013).

The graphic revision of the cartography allows quantifying each drawn outline, In this case, we chose to describe the Panier, representing the surface of public space, among streets, pedestrian slopes and places related to the space inside the shops at the ground floor (Fig. 5).

As in a paper of Nolli or a reworking (Tice, 2005-2016), the public space and the non-private surface inside the buildings communicate directly. In fact, you can often come across some dehors improvised on the pavements, in front of cafés and shops. The tendency of frequenter, but above all of managers of Panier shops, is to conquer the doorstep, also by sitting on a step, and to look for communication with passers-by or people who live in front of the shops. The pastis and the kemia – black and green olives, cucumbers and pickles – were typical of the art of living of Marseille. A period in which people could still speak and had still things to say (Izzo, 1995).

## CONCLUSION

The oldest Mediterranean cities are characterized by a complex stratification: the links between one or more historical centers and the system of traditional established relations combine with new relations and new areas of the city, often lacking in a definite structure. Therefore, the dwellers of the oldest structures seek refuge in memory and in tradition. From any point of view, we would hardly find clear urban models in the Mediterranean area; we talk about complex realities, characterized by a mixture of different activities and social groups.



**Figure 5:** Panier – 1. Masterplan of the Panier: a clear distinction is made between the buildings which are for a residential use and the buildings with a shop in the ground floor. 2. The quantitative analysis of the public space. The measurement results which are obtained, make the Panier, in Marseille, comparable with another historic district in another Mediterranean city.

The distribution of worker residence follows quite faithfully the localization of manufactures; it is very often in socially mixed areas where the lower middle class is present: the Mediterranean city knows the slum, but does not know the worker district inherited from the Industrial Revolution of the cities of Central Europe. If there is social and space isolation, above all it corresponds to an intentional “secession” of the most well-to-do classes (as we saw for the Panier district in Marseille, for example). The social mixture is established by the persistency of forms of residential differentiation alternative to that of neighborhood with the same economic activities that are often geographically interwoven with the residence according to a spontaneous scheme.

The new developments of the activities and residential localization have not “damaged” these behaviors; and, essentially, the northern and southern cities have deep differences that originate from the theme of tradition and of anthropology of populations. The use of the term “tradition”, reminds of an image that we associate to “classic”, “past”, “anti-contemporaneous”; but in this case, we mean all the elements that follow something familiar, which consistently moves away from the habits and the natural ways of living his own house and his own city. The tradition

refers to the vernacular house and its link with the external space. This relationship tell us that something has socially changed, but also that there is a specific mediterranean attitude for living public spaces that is not distorted.

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## WHAT IF STREETS SPEAK OUT...?

**RITA NASR**

Freelance architect Beirut Lebanon. **E:** ritahnasr@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

Streets are living organisms in the city. They are in a constant transformation. Even if streets do not have a tongue to speak, but they have their own language...they speak through transformations. Recently, Lebanon is facing a trash crisis which is still unresolved. Garbage is piled up on streets creating hills of trashes and destructing its nature. If we describe the current dilemma, we find that the streets are becoming narrower, sidewalks are hidden by trash, people have no space to walk and use the streets, walls are being constructed on the streets to forbid people from throwing trashes and finally garbage is gathered and burned randomly while suffocating dwellers... Therefore, streets are being transformed from a hub of human activities to a dump of neglected wastes... The aim of this research is to focus on the current situation of streets where walls are being constructed lately and used as communicators and at the same time as separators. The outcome of this study is to analyze on the one hand the side effects of this crisis on the streets while displaying on the other hand the duality that the constructed walls are presenting and their dialectical use and relation to streets without ignoring the reaction of dwellers and government to this dilemma. Streets have always been the political, social, and cultural reference points in the city, now they are sending us an alert by speaking out their transformations!

### KEYWORDS

Solid wastes, street walls, street transformations

# What If Streets Speak Out?

## City Streets Transformations: Erection of Walls

Streets are living organisms in the city. They are in a constant transformation. Even if streets do not have a tongue to speak, but they have their own language...they speak through transformations. Recently, Lebanon is facing a trash crisis which is still unresolved. Garbage is piled up on streets creating hills of trashes and destructing its nature. If we describe the current dilemma, we find that the streets are becoming narrower, sidewalks are hidden by trash, people have no space to walk and use the streets, walls are being constructed on the streets to

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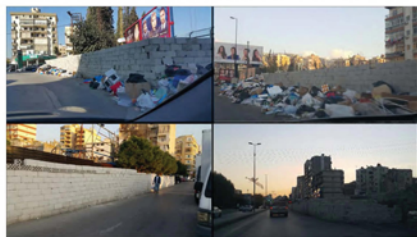
**Keywords:** trash crisis, streets walls, street transformations

### Introduction

Walls in the city have different dimensions and roles. They can be used as dividers, to delimitate borders, to indicate political significance (ex: Berlin wall postwar division of power) as a symbol of explicit antagonistic ideologies between two societies. By contrast, walls can be used as communicators between people, city and government which render these walls as a canvas in the city and as tools for people to express democratically their thoughts. (Walls Borders Boundaries, Silberman M., 2012, p.78)

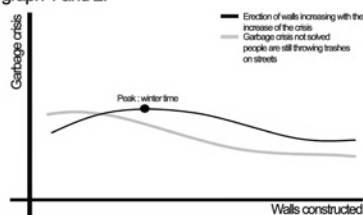


Caption 1: Blocking Beirut city from people expressing themselves outloud (https://stateofmind13.com/2015/09/22/blocking-down-town-beirut-from-the-people-is-unacceptable-this-is-the-true-abouts-ahousa/, 02-05-2016)

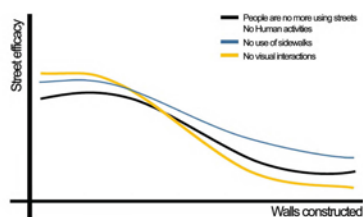


Caption 2: New use for walls in Beirut, Nasr, R., 2015

Erecting walls in the city of Beirut recently based on the garbage crisis influenced its streets efficacy as shown in graph 1 and 2.



Graph 1: Garbage crisis versus walls constructed, Nasr, R., 2016



Graph 2: Streets efficacy versus walls constructed, Nasr, R., 2016

### Methodology

#### Field Survey



Figure 1: Beirut map, the area of study (Dekwaneh, Jdaideh, Industrial zone)

#### Surveyed Wall Parameters



Location	Jdaideh, facing the clock roundpoint
Street Name	Al Madafien street
Date of wall Construction	Constructed in november, 2015
Wall Description	Constructed with concrete masonry blocks, on the sidewalk and extends to the road approximately 1.8m
Wall Length	sides: 3.6m / 5.4m / 3.6m total length: 12.6m
Wall Height	1.8m as an average height
Constructed by	Municipality of Jdaideh
Road type	Secondary road
Adjacent Land uses	Shops, mixed use building (residential/commercial/offices)

Table 1: Specifications gathered for a wall sample

A survey was done during December 2015 (within the period of garbage crisis), over the areas mentioned in Fig.1, in order to analyse the erection of walls in the city and their relationship to the crisis. All the parameters mentioned in Table 1 were used to analyse the purpose of usage and side effects of such walls in the city (Fig. 3).

#### Constructed Walls Analysis

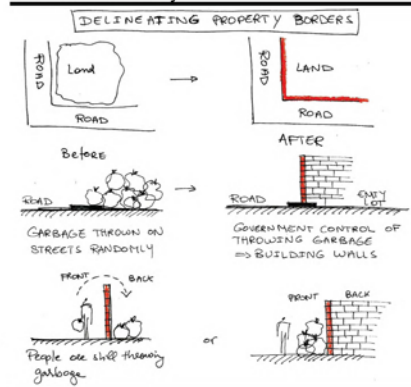
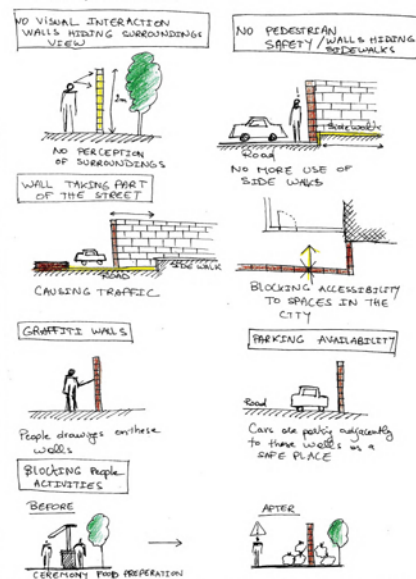


Figure 2: Current role of constructed walls in the city, Nasr, R., 2016

In such case, as shown in Fig. 2, walls were constructed by the government (municipality) as a tool to control people things and activities, in order to forbid them from throwing their trashes around. Therefore, these walls serves as means to demarcate and protect owners properties or empty lands from being transformed into trash lands, since there is no definite solution yet for garbage crisis in Lebanon

### Results

This survey was initiated to show the social and cultural impact of the erected walls on spaces and people activities, as shown in Fig. 4, by analysing its side effects in addition to its relationship to the crisis.



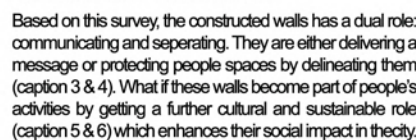
The construction of such walls didn't solve the trash crisis because people are still throwing their garbage. Instead, these walls are diminishing the role of streets and people social activities in the city.

Figure 3: Constructed walls in the city, side effects analysis, Nasr, R., 2016

#### Conclusion



Caption 3 & 4: Walls communicating and delineating or protecting, Nasr, R., 2015



Caption 5 & 6: Green walls and graffiti, Nasr, R., 2015

Based on this survey, the constructed walls has a dual role: communicating and separating. They are either delivering a message or protecting people spaces by delineating them (caption 3 & 4). What if these walls become part of people's activities by getting a further cultural and sustainable role (caption 5 & 6) which enhances their social impact in the city.

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## 5KM/H MANIFESTO

**THERESE CHIDIAC**

Freelance architect Beirut Lebanon. **E:** theresechidiac@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

5km/h Manifesto is a thesis paper developed in 2015 by Therese Chidiac for her Master degree in Architecture tutored by Professor Stefano Boeri at the Politecnico di Milano, with the purpose of stimulating change in the public space of Dubai and in rethinking the future role of architects. The work started after a six months critical analysis of Dubai market and urban context tackling the problematical aspects of its exogenous public spaces that are a model of a virtual Panopticon of Social Surveillance forged by a set of Do's and Don'ts : A Paranoiac Panopticon! In this framework, the Manifesto aims to bring back the social agenda and activist role of the architect in the society and to spread awareness provoking people for their "right to the city" by recalling the qualities of the Arabic Souk and integrating them in a series of utopian urban interventions. The research work becomes more of a process, an experiment of trial and error that navigates via theoretical metaphors of Delirious Dubai, a society of the spectacle and a collage of defected spaces. Then, it elaborates on a series of "do it yourself" zero-volume urban devices that can potentially transform the city, and stimulate change in the public space ground, sky and regulations. What gives these various experiments some kind of unity is that they explore, and potentially reveal, the alternative cities within the existing city, identifying new possibilities in taken for granted spaces, redefining the physical and the spontaneous. It is a slow Manifesto at 5km/h equal to two pedestrian steps per second, a "to human scale" movement towards a bigger process of change, exchange and possibilities. It opens to doubt and uncertainty creating debate and discussion. It breaks down the known into particles of the unknown where new unpredictable qualities might emerge.

### KEYWORDS

Public space - Activism - Dubai



## 5km/h MANIFESTO

THERESE CHEDIAK  
Masters in Architecture  
Politecnico di Milano (IT)  
thereschidiak@gmail.com



Open to doubt and  
uncertainty

Towards a bigger  
process of change in  
the public space  
ground, sky and  
RULES

PEOPLE

RIGHT TO THE CITY

THE WALK  
at JBR  
IL GELATO

DON'T  
BLEACH!

45000 euro  
Rent per Month  
2 Bed Apartment in  
PALM JUMEIRAH

Beckham sell  
your house! THE  
WORLD IS SINKING!

MISCELLANEOUS

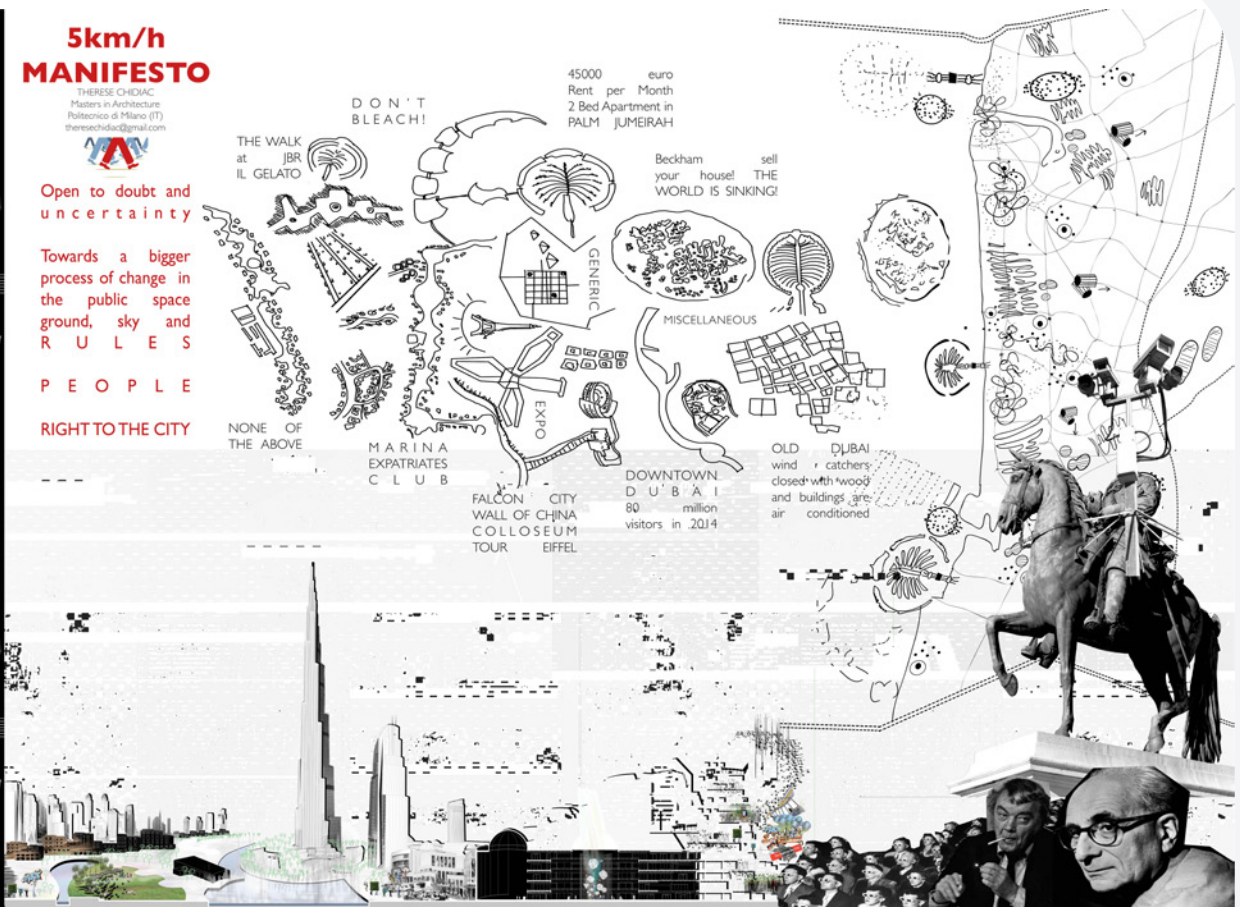
NONE OF  
THE ABOVE

MARINA  
EXPATRIATES  
CLUB

FALCON CITY  
WALL OF CHINA  
COLLOSEUM  
TOUR EIFFEL

DOWNTOWN  
DUBAI  
80 million  
visitors in 2014

OLD DUBAI  
wind catches  
closed with wood  
and buildings are  
air conditioned



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